Barnabas CLARKSFIELD

September 2023

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Services at St Barnabas' Church

Sunday 9:30 am Parish Worship

Wednesday 10:00 am Bible study

Thursday 10:00 am Holy Communion (said)

Thursday 4:00 pm Breathe! Young children's praise

The first Wednesday of each month: Holy Communion at the Alexandra Nursing Home in Glodwick, at 11:15 am.

Baptisms and marriages by arrangement with the Vicar.

Please submit items for the October magazine by 15 September. 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

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	Lucie Reilly	(07880) 861 751
Wardens	Peter Haslam Lucie Reilly	(0161) 345 0215 (07880) 861 751
Administrator	Sarah Gura	(07708) 714 813
Community Worker	MaryAnne Oduntan	(07908) 004 682
Treasurer	Mrs Vicky Heaton	(07468) 463 753
Parish Hall bookings	The Vicar	(0161) 624 7708

September has many highlights but, for me, one of the best is returning to a sense of regularity after the summer break. We see familiar faces and remember the tried and trusted structures. Services feel more predictable; our children return to school; and we know where we are without constantly looking at a diary. The holidays and time off are certainly wonderful, but I relish the return of regularity because I can predict and therefore plan and enjoy it more.

Spirituality takes a great many forms, but all work best when practised from within a tried and trusted structure. That built-in rhythm is a strength because, like other forms of externally applied structure, it helps when we feel lost, weak, or are starting out as a beginner. The spiritual structure can then act much like a buttress or syllabus.

Most Christians benefit from a predetermined time when they study the scriptures, when they pray, and devise a 'template' into which that reading and prayer occurs. But those spiritual structures need to be customised somewhat because we all live such complicated lives. We all differ in terms of needs, habits, and lifestyles.

But spiritual structures can be unhelpful and not a blessing. Spiritualities that are overly regimented stifle our prayer life. We can move from worshipping with the liturgy as an aid to worshipping the liturgy itself, at which point we move from worship into idolatry. God does not want that.

Some spiritual structures require much preparation while others are considerably more free and flexible. But both benefit from companionship of some kind, so we share our spiritual 'pilgrimage' with friends or other like-minded people.

It may help to explore the creation of these spiritual patterns with the aid of a Christian who has more experience than us or has been a Christian for longer. Such a person may be described as a 'spiritual director' or 'soul friend'—they mean the same. And their task is to help and support. As we grow toward God.

Wishing every blessing as you grow into Christlikeness.

PAUL

News from the Church and parish

Mary Monk

Huge congratulations to Mary Monk on achieving her art A-level. She was awarded a top mark of 85%.

Annual confirmation service

The confirmation service will include the whole mission community. It will therefore cater for six local churches and, therefore, will not involve Holy Communion.

Service The service occurs in Holy Trinity Church, Waterhead (OL4 2JQ) on Sunday 26 November at 3:00 pm. It will last about an hour.

Classes There will be six classes, each of which will be duplicated as we recognise that many folk have busy lives: The classes will convene at St Barnabas Church, Arundel Street, Clarksfield OL4 1NL. Sessions will be each Tuesday at 5:00 pm and each Saturday at 4:00 pm, and will each last about an hour. The first class occurs on Tuesday 12 September.

Eligibility Each candidate must be baptised and aged 12 or above on the date of the service.

Forms are available at the back of the church. Please give your completed forms to Paul. Thank you.

God expects one thing of you, and that is that you should come out of yourself in so far as you are a created being and let God be in you.

Meister Eckhardt

Bible readings for September

Sunday 3 September Trinity 13

First: Jeremiah 15:15–21 Epistle: Romans 12:9–end Gospel: Matthew 16:21–end

Sunday 17 September Trinity 15

First: Genesis 50:15–21 Epistle: Romans 14:1–12 Gospel: Matthew 18:21–35

Sunday 10 September Trinity 14

First: Ezekiel 33:7–11 Epistle: Romans 13:8–end Gospel: Matthew 18:15–20

Sunday 24 September Trinity 16

First: Jonah 3:10—end of 4 Epistle: Philippians 1:21–end Gospel: Matthew 20:1–16

Faith at Barnabas = FAB

Breath!

Each Thursday at 4:00 pm Worship with young children:

Age-appropriate Gospel message

Singing Prayers

We start with food and craftwork.
All are welcome.

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The Bible teaches about its own content, saying 'All Scripture is inspired by God' (2 Timothy 3:16). In other words, the Holy Spirit of God is somehow responsible for the transmission of messages from God.

It is unwise to treat the Bible as an example of 'divine dictation'. Rather, the Holy Spirit has somehow used human beings as his medium during its composition. We know the names of many of these people: Saint Paul wrote many letters to early churches; Saint John wrote a gospel as a memorial for his community in Ephesus; King David wrote scores of songs that we treasure today as the Psalms.

Although God inspired these writings, somehow the personality of each writer has been retained: their personalities shine through the text.

Seek by reading, and you will find meditation; cry in prayer, and the door will be opened in contemplation.

St John of the Cross

The monks of long ago taught that God not only inspired the scriptures but also left something of Himself embedded deep in the text, thereby facilitating their interpretation. So, even if a passage of scripture seems opaque and difficult to understand, we have access to the Holy Spirit, its author. If we ask him then, with care and meditation, he will divulge something of its meaning. The monks called this means of access *lectio divina*—literally, 'divine reading.'

Lectio divina is a form of prayer. In this prayer, the person praying first tries to centre both soul and mind on God. When we feel close to God, we start reading a passage of scripture. Generally, it is wise to choose a short passage, which is then read slowly and meditatively, again and again and again. A recent writer uses the following metaphor, 'I pop a text in my mouth and chew on it a little to let out the full flavour'.

Sometimes nothing happens.

Perhaps it was the wrong passage for us today. Perhaps
we were distracted, or simply not in the mood. But at other times, a

word or short phrase slowly assumes greater importance. It somehow speaks of God, gradually resonating with something deep within us. 'Deep calls to deep' (Psalm 42:7) and the Holy Spirit has somehow communicated something of himself to us today, which gives the passage a greater meaning.

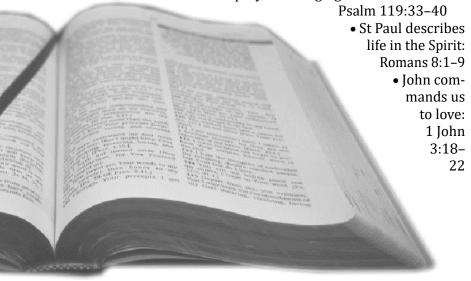
If time permits, it is best to read a passage until its 'exhausted'—that is, until it has stopped yielding its secrets, at least for the time being.

<u> Exercise</u>

Read one or more of the passages below or, if you prefer, another favourite passage. Read it very slowly, savouring each and every word. Then slowly re-read it three or four times. Which words begin to resonate for you, 'jumping off the page'? Which image(s) in the passage speak to you, today?

• God wants us to worship Him with acts of justice: Isaiah 58:6–9 (In this passage, Isaiah uses 'fasting' as one example of a religious practice.)

• A prayer of longing to understand God:



Lectio Divina

Meister Eckhart (c. 1260–c. 1328) was the name by which Eckhart von Hochheim, a German Roman Catholic theologian, philosopher and mystic, was commonly known. He was born in the village of Tambach not far from Erfurt, the capital city of the state of Thuringia, where he is assumed to have joined the Dominican order as a novice in his mid to late teens. Subsequent to this, he is thought to have studied at Cologne, where the renowned German theologian Albertus Magnus lectured. He most certainly went on to study and then teach theology himself at the University of Paris, where he preached the Easter sermon, at the Dominican convent of St. Jacques, in 1294.

Later that year, he was made Prior of Erfurt at the monastery where he had spent his early years. His earliest work in German dates from this time. Between 1302 and 1313 he alternated between various posts in Paris and Erfurt.

After leaving Paris again in 1313 where he had been appointed for a second time to teach at the university—a distinction previously only granted to Thomas Aquinas—he relocated to Strasbourg to take up a position as special vicar to the Master of the Dominican Order.

He stayed in Strasbourg for ten years, providing counsel to various religious orders, including Dominican nuns and notably the Beguines, a lay Christian sisterhood. In 1323 he returned to Cologne, where, three years later, he was summoned before the Inquisition on the charge of heresy. Apparently, Eckhart was too radical in his teachings for the conservative-minded Archbishop of Cologne, whose attention was drawn to him not least as a result of other clerics within Eckhart's own order stirring things up in order to deflect attention from themselves. His association with lay groups cannot have helped his case, either.

At the proceedings, Eckhart argued that if he was at fault in any way, then this was due to intellectual failure on his part, not wilful heresy. He also stated publicly his willingness to retract any errors that he might be deemed to have committed. Nevertheless, sentence was pronounced on Eckhart, leaving him no option but to refute the authority of the court and appeal to the Pope to intervene. A year later, in 1327, he set out for Avignon, where the papacy was then resident, and although he initially managed to participate in the papal inquiry into his work, he fell ill and died a year later before the findings were published. While the commission was more concerned with Eckhart's

orthodoxy than his heresy, the decree that was issued, known as a 'papal bull', did find fault with his propositions on several counts of varying seriousness and advised against their general publication. Nowhere in the bull was he declared a heretic, though.

Throughout is adult life, Meister Eckhart was not only a know-ledgeable theologian but also an accomplished preacher, regularly giving sermons in the language spoken by ordinary people.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy writes of Eckhart: 'the German title Meister ('master') is often mistakenly assumed to reflect Eckhart's status as a spiritual 'guru' of sorts, when in reality it derives from the Latin honorific magister, a title granted only to the most learned of university-trained scholars of his day. Yet neither the contemporary philosophers who ignore him nor the new-age enthusiasts who adore him adequately capture the complexity of the Meister, who was both a sophisticated and well-respected intellectual—a master of letters, learning, and language—as well as a spiritual leader of his order helping the men and women under his instruction to master the "wayless ways" of leaving the self, knowing God, and living well.

John Booth



Praying

It doesn't have to be the blue iris, it could be weeds in a vacant lot, or a few small stones; just pay attention, then patch

a few words together and don't try to make them elaborate, this isn't a contest but the doorway

into thanks, and a silence in which another voice may speak.

Mary Oliver

Letter from Revd Denise Owen

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This is the last time I'll be writing as vicar of Moorside and Assistant Curate at Clarksfield and Waterhead, because as you know I am moving on to pastures new. I am moving to Mossley and Stalybridge where I'll be the vicar of three churches, a much bigger job! Inevitably I'm looking back to the time I've spent here in Oldham, and looking forward to what is to come.

There's a wonderful phrase I've heard about the Christian life and ministry, 'For all that has been, Thanks, and for all that is to come, Yes!' And this is very much the attitude I'm trying to cultivate in myself at the moment. I look back with gratitude to God for all the people I've got to know, all the experiences I've had, and for all the blessings God has given me, and I look forward to the new things that I'll discover when I move. I know it will be different, but I also know that God will walk with me, and I pray, lead me in the right path.

I can't leave without offering many, many thanks to all of you, to the people I've got to know through leading worship in your churches, at PCC meetings, or at social gatherings. It has been a real privilege to minister alongside you. I'm not really going very far, so we may well meet again. I hope so anyway. I'm so appreciative of your help and support in the years I've been here, and I know that God will continue to bless you and all you do.

So, I want to say one more sincere and heartfelt 'THANK YOU' to everyone.

With all best wishes and prayers for your future.

Revd Denise

God is bound to act, to pour Himself into thee as soon as He shall find thee ready.

Meister Eckhardt

A person must become truly poor and as free from their own creaturely will as if they were born blind. And I tell you, by the eternal truth, that so long as you *desire* to fulfil the will of God and have a hankering after eternity and God, for just so long you are truly poor. The only person who has true spiritual poverty wills nothing, knows nothing, desires nothing.

Eckhart's take on the beatitude, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3)



'I've got you down for blood, frogs, lice, locusts, and hail ... would you like that with flies?'

(with apologies to Exodus 7-12)

The cross on which our Lord was crucified has become the universal symbol for Christianity. It replaced the fish symbol of the early church, though the latter has been revived somewhat in recent times.

After the end of the persecution era, early in the fourth century, pilgrims began to travel to Jerusalem to visit and pray at the places associated with the life of Jesus. One such pilgrim was Helena, the mother of the first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great. While helping to oversee excavations in the city, Helena is said to have uncovered a cross, which many at the time believed to be the true Cross of Christ.

A basilica was built on the site of the Holy Sepulchre and dedicated on 14
September in the year 335 AD.

'The Cloister Cross' was made in 1150–60 and comes from the abbey at Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. To learn more about this wonderful artifact, please **click here**.

Holy Cross Day

A GO BA:RVIT:OFO F

Almighty God, who in the passion of your blessèd Son made an instrument of painful death to be for us the means of life and peace: grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer for his sake; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

The Collect for Holy Cross Day

From the Parish Registers

Christian baptism

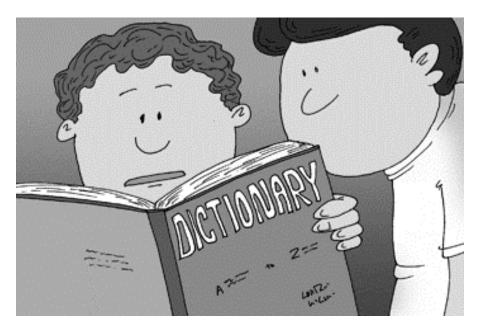
Sunday 27 August Whyatt and Ruben Birtles

Jazmin Howarth Stephanie Howarth all at Waterhead Church

Christian funeral

Tuesday 15 August Dorothy Grime Wednesday 30 August Joyce Cumpsty Thursday 31 August Ann Lundy

all at Oldham Crematorium



'He's right: "pearl" does come before "swine"!' (with apologies to Matthew 7:6)

Why bother?

Because right now, there is someone

out there with

a wound in the exact shape

of your words.

Sean Thomas Dougherty

It's common to hear people say, 'Science has proved religion is wrong' or that, 'Science is incompatible with faith'. Why then, if true, do many scientists live a religious faith?

Many misunderstandings underpin these terms. In fact, religion, faith, and science are three different things:

- 1. The word 'religion' generally implies a series of moral rules, codes, and laws.
- 2. The word 'faith' is different and means a belief in something that is not subject to objective verification.
- 3. The word 'science' means a step-by-step attempt to understand the world. It usually involves experimentation and thought as a means to formulating rules and models.

While these three concepts differ, they do overlap.

As a crude generalisation, Judaism and Islam are principally a religion because they centre around laws, rules, codes, and regulations. Some of those rules are very specific such as 'Do not kill' or might dictate times of prayer. Christianity is principally a faith as it talks most about God, about Jesus being God incarnate, about atonement, the forgiveness of sins, and about an afterlife—none of which can be proved.

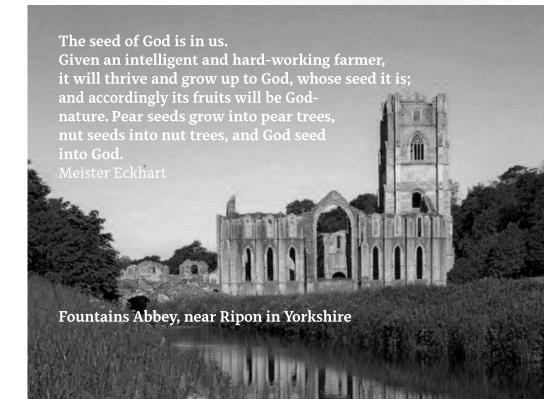
There are clearly substantial overlaps. Both Judaism and Islam are faiths because they centre around an unseen, spiritual God whose existence cannot be proved; rather, His presence must be taken on trust. And the laws at the heart of these religions are said to come from this God. Christianity also subscribes to laws such as 'Do not kill' or 'Do not tell lies'. Some of the commandments in Christianity are imprecise: for although Jesus said, 'Love one another as I have loved you', we may often need to guess what his love would be like.

Contrary to popular opinion, science is generally more of a faith than a religion. Only very rarely are its rules seen as unchangeable because so many rules can and do alter often, generally as more facts come to light. Therefore, while we may talk about the 'laws of science' (such as the 'laws of gravity' or 'the laws of mathematics'), in fact they are simply statements describing the current extent of our knowledge. They offer a 'snapshot' describing the way we understand our world today ... but no more. One obvious example: astronomy has moved from the idea that the earth is at the centre of the universe, to the sun at the centre, through to the solar system being part of the Milky Way which is itself somewhere near the outer edge of one galaxy.

A good scientist is therefore a person of faith insofar as they will live with a lot of ideas that cannot be proved and is therefore taken on trust. Like a person following a spiritual faith, their views and opinions will change in response to changes in what is known. Perhaps that explains why the American monk Thomas Merton, talking about growing in faith, once said, 'Prayer is to faith what research is to science'.

Faith, religion, and science

As science and faith are so similar, we can learn from science how to grow our faith. As the cosmologist Carl Sagan said, 'Sceptical scrutiny is the means, in both science and religion, by which deep thoughts can be winnowed from deep nonsense'. And Galileo, who was the first scientist in recent times to say openly that the earth travelled round the sun, said, 'I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with senses, reason, and intellect has intended us to forego their use'.







Church diary

Sunday 24 September 3:30 pm: **Concert** at Oldham Parish Church (as

opposite).

Sunday 8 October 9:30 am: **Harvest Festival**.

Saturday 21 October 7:00 for 7:30 pm: **Quiz** at Waterhead Parish Centre. Sunday 29 October 4:00 pm: **All Souls' service** at Waterhead Church.

Sunday 12 November 9:30 am: **Remembrance Sunday**.

Sunday 26 November 3:00 pm: **Confirmation** at Waterhead Church

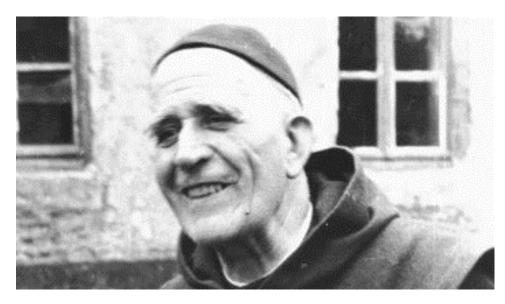
(as opposite).

 $Sunday\ 17\ December \quad \ 6:00\ pm; \textbf{Carol service}\ at\ St\ Barnabas\ Church.$

Sunday 24 December 4:00 pm: **Christingle service** at Waterhead Church.

Sunday 24 December 11:30 pm: **Midnight Mass** at Waterhead Church.

Monday 25 December 9:30 am: Christmas Day service.



Sanctity consists in this reign of the Holy Spirit in a soul. He enlightens the soul at each instant, moves it, and makes of it another Christ, another humanity for Christ in which He can do His work.

Blessèd Marie-Eugène of the Child Jesus

The Right Word Outside the door lurking in the shadows is a terrorist.

Is that the wrong description? Outside that door, Taking shelter in the shadows, is a freedom fighter.

I haven't got this right.
Outside, waiting in the shadows is a hostile militant.

Are words no more than waving, wavering flags? Outside your door watchful in the shadows is a guerrilla warrior.

God help me.
Outside, defying every shadow,
Stands a martyr.
I saw his face.

No words can help me now. Just outside the door, lost in shadows, is a child who looks like mine.

One word for you.
Outside my door,
his hand too steady,
his eyes too hard,
is a boy who looks like your son, too.

I open the door. Come in, I say. Come in and eat with us.

The child steps in and carefully, at my door, takes off his shoes.

Crucifixion

J I C M A H B U O L G G W G B Z E U S Q Z F U N U A S J H M Y N U A S E M K F X E L K T Z Z M G STVITSQROWKBSELPICS F C G A P Q P W B W W L K B E K A U Q H T R A E A H S Y Z M F V B T Y C N R A R A Y X T V C C X IZISIPFVUYQGMINXFAAKITBQ HXSFSISCBMEHQVEBQRO CXAGEIOKXBESIINOJPIAPYGB L E B D N W R Q O J Q I X N O J E USCMKCCVWWLHDETTF J O R A Q Q V O I K J G S OAVDDZXEZUAGDF M L H Y L W X F I M E E O Q G U A R D DIUNHAXXSMKROCJVBYZXGDBS

Wordsearch

Find these words in the grid above

Betrayal, Cross, Crucifixion, Darkness, Disciples, Earthquake, Guards, Jesus, Mary, Pilate, Sepulchre, Simon, Soldiers, Stone, Thieves, Veil, Vinegar,

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