

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 Fab = faith at Barnabas!
(praise for young children)

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 December magazine by 15
November. 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

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

Letter from the Vi

I'm enjoying the fruit growing everywhere around this time of year. Many wild blackberries grow within a hundred yards of our house. I am looking forward very much to tasting them.

Actually, in our house we don't often eat this fruit straight from the cane. Rather, we turn it into jams and pickles. That way it lasts for as long as we want it. In past times, and not so long ago, preserving fruits and vegetables became something of an art form—seeing who could keep the produce edible for longest. Without the luxury of a fridge or long-distance commerce, it was essential to keep the fruit because otherwise there would be none by the early winter: so the late winter and most of spring could be a time of dreadful hunger.

Perhaps we should invoke the biblical idea of 'laying up goodness from times of plenty to use during times of need'—it underpins part of the story of Joseph in Genesis, for example. As people of faith, we also need to adapt this same idea and use it for ourselves. Let me explain.

People of faith have always found that God sometimes appears very close and accessible, but at other times he seems distant—invisible even. It's virtually impossible to worship God during those times when he seems too distant to allow prayer and meditation. How can we feed on that which is not there? So it's vitally important that we save the aspects of God's goodness we encounter when He *does* seem close.

There are many reasons why God seems distant: it might just be the lack of light during the long winter months, leading to forms of depression. Otherwise, illness, tiredness and exhaustion are obvious, as are the forms of sin we refuse to acknowledge. Sometimes God just seems distant. Whatever the reason, when He *is* absent, people of can feel very vulnerable, exposed and 'down.' At such times, it's vitally important that we have previously 'preserved' God's goodness, and then 'feed' on him.

The forms of preservation will vary from person to person. Keeping a diary can help by recording times when God seems particularly close. Merely asking God to help us in future times of need is a form of preserving his presence. Worshipping him more fervently will also help.

I'm going to return now to the fruits found in the wild places near here and enjoy their glorious flavour. In the same way, I want to enjoy the glorious experience of knowing God and his love.

Wishing you God's blessing and goodness:

PAUL



Quality in Action Award

Action Together has awarded us the prestigious 'Quality in Action' Award.

This image shows Uzma Khaliq from Action Together presenting the award to Vicar Paul and our Community Worker, MaryAnne Oduntan, and surrounded by members of the Women Thrive! group.

Clock here for a press release with images.

Council for Social Action

We have been awarded £30,000 by the *Council for Social Action* (CSA)—a charity administered by the Diocese of Manchester. This grant will enable us to expand our existing community project, with work in and with the other local churches in our Mission Community.

Since receiving the award, Vicar Paul is now a trustee of the CSA.



Bible readings for November

Sunday 29 October

All Saints

First: Revelation 7:9-end Epistle: 1 John 3:1-3 Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

Sunday 12 November

Remembrance

First: Wisdom 6:12–16 Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 4:13–end

Gospel: Matthew 25:1–13

Sunday 27 November

Christ the King

First: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 Epistle: Ephesians 1:15-end Gospel: Matthew 25:31-end

Sunday 5 November

Fourth Sunday before Advent

First: Micah 3:5-end

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 2:9–13 Gospel: Matthew 24:1–14

Sunday 19 November

Second Sunday before Advent

First: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-end Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 Gospel: Matthew 25:14-20

Sunday 3 December

Advent Sunday

First: Isaiah 64:1-9

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 Gospel: Mark 13:24-end

Image from the James Webb telescope

93 percent stardust

We have calcium in our bones, iron in our veins, carbon in our souls, and nitrogen in our brains.

93 percent stardust, with souls made of flames, we are all just stars that have people names.

Nikita Gill





'Good grief man! Can't you see that we need each other? I can't bow my head and you can't put your hands together. If we don't team up, we haven't got a prayer!'

The place where we are right

From the place where we are right Flowers will never grow In the spring.

The place where we are right Is hard and trampled Like a yard.

But doubts and loves
Dig up the world
Like a mole, a plough.
And a whisper will be heard in the place
Where the ruined
House once stood.
Yehuda Amichai

Church diary

Sunday 29 October 4:00 pm: **All Souls' service** in Waterhead Church.

Sunday 13 November 9:30 am: **Remembrance Sunday**.

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

Saturday 10 December 2:30 pm: Christmas Swing Band Concert

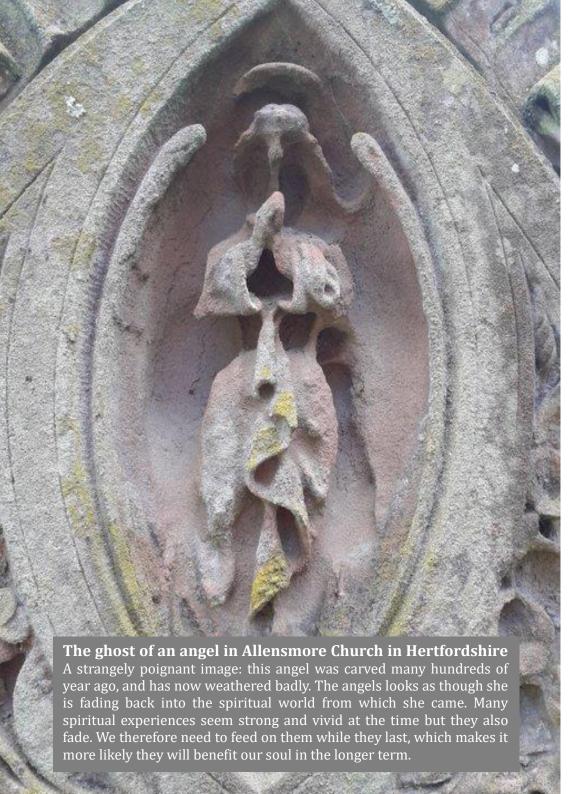
at Waterhead Parish Centre (see poster left).

Sunday 17 December 6:00 pm: **Carol service**.

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 in the Church.



It'll never catch on Gordon Bailey Contemporary from 100

Listen, I'm telling you, It'll never catch on! I'm the guy with the advertising agency, you're the bloke with the boat, right? You want a motif, a logo, a symbol for your set-up, and you came to me with this crazy idea; listen, you said your set up stands for life, liberty, truth, love, joy, peace, hope, all the big stuff; well then, you'll have to have a symbol which a lady will wear at her wrist or her throat, or a gent will attach to the lapel of his coat; what d'you mean: 'What's a lapel?'? I mean, what set-up standing for life is going to expect it's members to wear a badge with something totally inappropriate on it, like a, er, a guillotine, or a gas chamber, or an electric chair, or a gallows? You gotta have a symbol that'll catch on, a dove, an eagle, spirit of life and freedom, right?

Here, George,
I just had this chap come in,
belongs to this set-up,
you know, they stand for all the big ideals,
life liberty, love, like that,
and he had this idea for a logo:
a cross!

a cross! Yeh, a cross!

Your actual means of execution.

Yeh, well, if that's how you feel.

Yeh—right!

I thought what sorta lady is gonna wear a cross round her neck!

That's right, exactly what I said:

It'll never catch on,

never in a thousand years.



Wordsearch for All Saints Day

Can you find these saints' names in the grid above?

Anne, Augustine, Elizabeth, Francis, George, Isidore, Joachim, Joan, John, Joseph, Juan, Marguerite, Mary, Michael, Nicholas, Peter, Raphael, Rose, Teresa, Thomas, Valentine, Vincent.

The church celebrates All Saints' Day on 1 November.

'Intercession' is the practice of asking God's help, requesting that He intervene in the world He created. We can say such prayers in public or in private. They occupy a central place in our weekly Eucharistic services. They appear between the Creed and the Peace.

Public intercession can be difficult. Commonly, many such prayers are too specific: 'we pray for Joe Bloggs, son of John and Betty Bloggs, as he enters ward 12 of the Oldham General Hospital for his operation on a heart value, at 10:15 on Friday 15th' Such prayers are unwise because:

- Prayers in this mode presuppose that God does not know what is happening in His world and needs to be reminded.
- All too frequently, broadcasting such excessive detail will breach the person's personal confidentiality.
- But perhaps the worst problem is the idea it sponsors, that the greater the number of words, the greater the likelihood of God answering. Jesus himself addressed this last view when he warned against 'babbling like the pagans' in prayer, with too many words (Matthew 6:7).

A moment's thought reveals why the power behind intercessory prayer does not lie in the actual words used, or even the sincerity of the person praying. If it was the words alone, then such prayers should more properly be called 'incantations' or even 'spells' and 'magic'. This observation becomes even more obvious when we realise how most people's intercessory prayers are in fact silent—maybe even wordless.

All biblical references to prayer stress that faith is important: for example, James 5:15 says that prayers 'offered in faith' are effective. He implies that prayers without faith are not effective. Again, this idea is prone to misconceptions: we are not being asked to believe more fervently, repeat more often, or strain more violently.

Actually, effective prayers accompany demonstrations of our faith. And the best way to show our faith is always the way we live, not the words we use in our prayers. The poem *Emerging* by R S Thomas (see the link below) makes this point very well.

There are many ways of praying intercessions. Words alone are never sufficient, whether said silently or spoken aloud. The person praying should always seek first to enter the presence of God: they 'recollect'.

Once the person praying is recollected and in communion with God —and only then—they should gently allow their request (s) to come before God. Some people find it useful to actually picture in their mind's eye the person or thing being prayed for, and then visualising God's healing love flowing into that person or situation, much like light streaming from the sun into a gloomy room. Later, with practise, it gradually becomes possible to know for whom or for what God wants us to pray because His presence becomes more intense, more intimate as our requests coincide with His will.

> First, consciously enter the presence of God. Then, in your imagination, picture the person or situation needing God's help. In your mind, gently raise the person or thing or situation into the presence of God, bathing them in His love and care.

Some of these links might be useful

https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-andworship/topical-prayers/leading-prayer-throughintercessions

> https://au.thegospelcoalition.org/article/preparing-tolead-intercessions-in-church

Emerging by R S Thomas http://www.cymru2008.com/rst/pemerging.html



Monday 9 October

Michael Cregan

at Oldham Crematorium.



Carol Service

Sunday 17 December at 6:00 pm

with the Tame Valley Brass at St Barnabas Church, Clarksfield (OL4 1NL)

barnabas-oldham.co.uk







We don't know much about the woman known to history as 'Julian of Norwich'. She was probably born in November 1342 and was certainly dead by 1416. We don't even know her real name.

The city of Norwich was the second largest in mediaeval England. The Church of St Julian in the centre of the ancient city contained an anchorite's cell, as was common in those days—a sort of flat for hermits. The hermits who lived there took the name of the Church, hence 'Julian of Norwich', although 'Julian' was also a fairly common name for women in the Middle Ages and could possibly have belonged to the anchoress as well as to the church.

Julian may have been from a privileged (wealthy) family residing in or near Norwich. It is quite possible that she received her early education from the Benedictine nuns at nearby Carrow Abbey.

Epidemics of plague were common during most of the fourteenth century, so Julian may have lost her family in the plague or become a hermit after being widowed. Becoming an anchoress may have served as a way to quarantine her from the rest of the population.

When she was thirty and while living at home, Julian suffered a serious, unknown, illness. She was close to death, so on 8 May 1373 her curate came to administer the last rites. As part of the ritual, he held a crucifix above her bed. Julian said later that she was losing her sight but, as she gazed on the crucifix, she saw the figure of Jesus begin to bleed.

Over the next few hours, Julian had a series of sixteen visions of Jesus, which ended by the time she recovered from her illness a week later on 13 May 1373. Julian immediately wrote about her visions in a text we now call the *Revelations of Divine Love*. It's a remarkable book of twenty-five chapters. To the modern reader it seems a little unstructured as it describes her visions. It rambles delightfully.

The *Revelations of Divine Love* is the first known theological book in the English language that was written by a woman. Two

To download the full text, explanations and explorations:

http://www.ccel.org/j/julian/revelations

https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Julian_of_Norwich

versions exist of this important Christian text: the first is Julian's first draft, written soon after her illness in 1373. The second and much longer text was written much later and offers a sustained meditation on her visions.

Julian's mystical theology is often expressed daringly. She likens God's love to the love of a mother, a theme found in the Biblical prophets, as in Isaiah 49:15. According to Julian, God is *both* our mother and our father.

Indeed, most of her themes relate to love. Even when talking of sin, she sees good. She says that sin is 'behovely', which is often translated as 'necessary', 'expedient', or 'appropriate'. By this phrase, Julian means that God can even use evil to create a greater good, because love always seeks

what is good.

In another vision she said, 'I saw that our Lord is to us everything which is good and comforting for our help. He is our clothing, who wraps and enfolds us for love, embraces us and shelters us, surrounds us for his love, which is so tender that he may never desert us. And so in this sight I saw that he is everything which is good.'

The poet T.S. Eliot famously used another of Julian's quotes, saying '... All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well' in his poem *Little Gidding* in his great book *Four Quartets*.

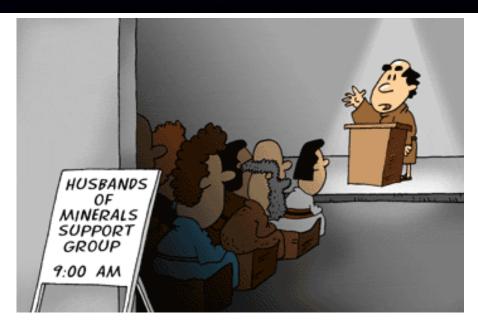


I have a dream that one day we will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all are created equal.'

Dr Martin Luther King Jr.



The American Dance Theatre in Robert Battle's Mass. Paul Kolnik



'Hello, my name is lot ...'
With apologies to Genesis 19:1-29)

A saint looks up from his prayers to discover he's been dead for some time

For St Robert of Knaresborough

After he retired to the cave prayer grew in him like a forest, sowed it seeds inside his psyche, rewilded his heart. He didn't see the centuries had passed without him.

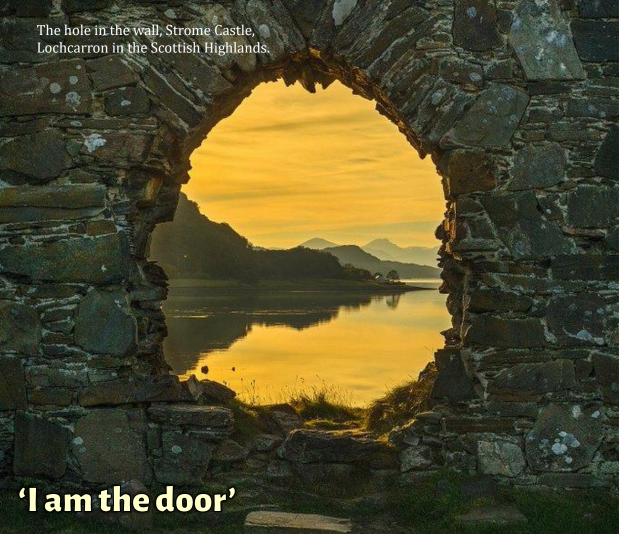
One day he looked up, hearing requests for intercession, and the woods were older than expected, the riverbanks shifted by the years —

and as he

knelt before the altar in his hermit's church, his knees disappeared below the edges of the emptied grave.

Jay Hulme, from The Vanishing Song, 2023

We celebrate All Saints' Day on 1 November



Jesus said, 'I am the door' (John 10:7). A door occupies the go-between zone between two worlds, and functions in keeping someone or something out or letting someone or something in.

In calling himself a door, Jesus meant that he stands between us and God. Heaven is a spiritual domain and we live in a physical place so, as go-between, he had to be both entirely spiritual and entirely physical. As the second person of the Trinity, he is entirely human and is entirely divine.

In being the door, we must pass *through* Jesus in order to reach God. If we are acceptable, we go through him to God and hence into Heaven.

It also implies that our prayers go through Jesus, and start in a physical way (as physical people we say them) and they become spiritual as he transmits them. That's one meaning of the phrase, 'praying in Jesus' name': it's a process of making a prayer a spiritual thing.

In being a door, Jesus can also bar the way if we are not acceptable, in order to stop us. We are not yet ready for Heaven.

Didyou know?

It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. *Mark* 14:1

The chief priests and scribes were desperate that the Passover celebrations should occur properly, because they included the Day of Atonement ceremony which only occurred once a year. On that day, the High Priest sacrificed a perfect lamb to atone for his own sins then ritually transferred the sins of the whole people to a small goat, which he then banished into the desert (hence the phrase 'scapegoat').

The ceremony had to be choreographed minutely. In particular, the High Priest had to wear a special ceremonial uniform whose form was dictated by Scripture. It comprised the ephod (a sleeveless tunic), a turban, and breastplate. These vestments were studded with jewels and precious gems, was and so loaded with history that the ceremony was invalidated without them.

The High Priestly vestments were held under lock and key in Pontius Pilate's official residence. This was a problem because the chief priests had to formally request them a few days before the actual Day of Atonement ceremony. And Pilate only released them under military guard. He did so to protect them and to avoid their becoming a centre of protest. Pilate would refuse to release them at the first sign of Trouble, meaning the Day of Atonement did not go ahead.

Pilate could be very petty and the Jewish people could be very excitable, so the chief priests were determined to remove Jesus without any demonstration from the people. Only by oiling up to Pilate could the chief priests remove Jesus and at the same time keep the Roman overlords happy. Only this way—'with stealth'—could they prevent the kind of trouble they feared.



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