

RHYTHMS OF DISCIPLESHIP - GOOD NEWS! - MAR/APR NEWS - COMING UP THIS EASTER!

'RHYTHMS OF DISCIPLESHIP'

"SEEK YE FIRST"



Written by Revd. Neil Cook
Team Rector of Church Wigan

What's your purpose as someone who had been personally called by Christ? As a Christian, what should you think and do? Not just on Sunday in church, but in each moment of every day? This is not always easy to answer, especially when life gets messy.

Yet Jesus did give us an answer in the Sermon on the Mount. Following reassurance that God will look after our needs even when our circumstances look bleak, he concluded (in the poetic words of the King James Bible), 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'

In other words, our priority should be to live in the kingdom of God. This can confuse us if we're not clear what Jesus means by 'kingdom of God.' People sometimes wrongly think he is talking about the place we go when we die. But by living in the kingdom Jesus means that, through our choice and God's grace, we live the way God wants us to live.

This is exactly what Jesus did during his days of earth. And he calls us to follow him, allowing his Spirit to shape us to become more like him. As Dallas Willard states with brilliant clarity in his book, 'The Divine Conspiracy',

'I am learning from Jesus to live my life as he would live my life if he were I.'

This is what the Bible calls this being his disciple, which we talk a lot about in Wigan. Indeed, it's our stated purpose: 'We join in with what God is doing - to make Disciples of Jesus - among all the people of Wigan Deanery.'

But we need more than talk. We need practical guidance. I believe the following will help as a frame to encourage your growth as a Christ-disciple just as a trellis supports a growing plant.

Rhythm of Discipleship

There are certain repeating patterns of behaviour which, when done with the aid of the Holy Spirit, help us become more like Christ. In Wigan we call this the 'rhythm of our discipleship'. Some of this we do on our own yet most we do alongside fellow Christians, either from our local church or through gathered Church Wigan activities.

We see seven elements, or 'beats', to the rhythm. Three of these relate to our inner journey of reflection - breathing in, as it were - and three to our outer journey of service - breathing out. At the centre is the biblical command to rest and be restored - a deep and grateful sigh.

-  **PRAY** - connecting with God, listening as well as speaking.
-  **READ [HEAR]** - the message of the bible.
-  **LEARN** - the way of faith and wisdom through example and story.
-  **RESTORE** - learning to trust God to stop, rest and fill up our faith tank.
-  **TELL** - sharing our story of the difference Jesus has made in our life.
-  **SERVE** - connecting with others in the search for hope, dignity and justice.
-  **GIVE** - living a life of generosity - 'freely you have received; freely give.'

Article continued overleaf...

Article continued...

Reflect on how you embody the elements and 'beats' of this rhythm in your life. And join in with activities that we'll organise to inspire and support you. One simple way is to try out The Well, our relaxed worship gathering which takes place at 7pm on the first Sunday of every month, in which insightful teachers from our diocese and beyond will reflect on each of the different elements.

Rev. Neil Cook



Youth Alpha Day

Exciting things are happening! On Wednesday 11th February, over 250 Year 7 Students from the Deanery High School and our Church Wigan Next Generation team headed over to The Edge, Wigan for this year's Alpha Youth Day. This was a day packed with conversation, creativity, movement, and music — offering young people the chance to explore faith, wrestle with big questions, and enjoy time together. This day follows on from the Youth Alpha sessions that have been run in school, in partnership with the Next Generation Team, as part of the Year 7 PSHE Curriculum.

The feedback from the young people speaks for itself. One student said:

"It was one of the most fun days I've had with school."

Another said:

"I would not be able to improve it at all — it was that good."

Thank you to all involved - this is such an incredible yearly opportunity for the Year 7 students at the Deanery High School. Thank you especially to The Next Generation team, Rev. Helen Deegan (school Chaplain) and Way Church.



 /NextGenWigan

 /WiganNextGen

For further info on Next Gen contact Andy Brown
andy.brown@wigan deanery trust.org

Prayer Points for March & April

1. Growth in Discipleship

Pray that people across Church Wigan would grow deeper in their walk with Jesus, developing strong rhythms of faith and service.

2. Fruitful Easter season

Ask God to prepare hearts across Wigan for Easter, that many would encounter the hope of Christ.

3. Wigan Next Generation Team

Particularly for the financing of the youth mission enabler roles and their work with young people across Wigan.

The Well - Dates & Speakers

 **Sunday 1st March | 7pm - 9pm**
St Mark's Church, Newtown

 **Sunday 5th April | 7pm - 9pm**
St Mark's Church, Newtown

Coming Up at the Well this March & April...

What does it really mean to live as a disciple of Jesus — not just on Sundays, but every day? Over the coming months at The Well, we'll be exploring the "Rhythm of Discipleship" — practical ways to grow in faith through prayer, learning, rest, generosity, service, and sharing our story.

Join us in March as our speaker, Archdeacon Simon Fisher, helps us begin this journey together.

Other Dates:

Sunday 3rd May & Sunday 7th June



Missed the last service? Don't worry - you can catch up on previous services on the Church Wigan YouTube Channel!

Recent videos also now include sung worship, in addition to the talk. Scan the QR code, or search 'Church Wigan' on YouTube for more information.

Good News from our Churches

News from St Elizabeths, Aspull

St Elizabeth's NE Hub Lighthouse group runs alongside the service on the 4th Sunday of the month and it is growing and thriving! Recently, the children have been learning about working together to spread God's light. They have been delving into crafts, games, Bible stories and learning how God's light brings joy and life. It's wonderful to see our youngest church members growing in their faith and learning how to share it with others!



News from Christchurch, Ince

In January some of us from Christ Church went along to Ince Central School to an "I Sing Pop" concert. The children had been learning the songs during the week led by Emma and Ben from "I Sing Pop", who are part of a nationwide team that work with schools and churches. The songs all have a Christian message presented in a very modern way. Between each song Emma gave a wonderful testimony about the love of Jesus. The kids had a great time singing and doing all the actions. Everyone watching thoroughly enjoyed it and we all joined in at the end singing and high fiving!

Celebrating 17 Years of StA's4All

This March marks the 17th anniversary of the StA's4All Worshipping Community at St Aidan's School in Billinge. What began through the vision of Alan Overend, Paul Cain, Helen Steele, and a dedicated team of volunteers has grown into a thriving community, continuing to share God's love across Billinge.

We give heartfelt thanks to everyone who has served at StA's over the years and offer our warmest congratulations as we celebrate this milestone together.



Sports Chaplaincy Update

We are a team of seven dedicated Sports Chaplains with a shared vision to see God's love transform our grassroots sports community here in Wigan. We long to see the church lived beyond the building - meeting people where they are - with our catchphrase, "spread the gold," at the heart of all we do. In recent months, God has encouraged us in so many ways: from



sponsoring a World Catch Wrestling Championship to receiving weekly moments of blessing and conversation at Laithwaite Park. By offering a listening ear and a steady presence, we seek to embody and reflect Christ.

As we began 2026, we gathered for a prayer morning, asking God to shape our vision and focus for the year ahead. We sensed a call to build on the foundations already laid at Highfield Cricket Club and Laithwaite Park, with Snakepit Catch Wrestling, and create opportunities at William Foster Site in Ince.

We are praying for growth in our team and would value prayers too; however, we also want to be a friend and support you as well, so if you would like us to pray for you or to find out more, please do get in touch at lizzy.cook@churchwigan.org. God bless.

  /ChurchWiganSportsChaplaincy

In Loving Memory of Revd. John Southern

All at Church Wigan and the Wigan Deanery Trust extend their deepest sympathy to the family of Revd. John Southern, who passed away this February.



A faithful priest and devoted servant of the people of Wigan for 66 years, John ministered with generosity and compassion in the parishes of St David, Haigh; St John, Pemberton; and St Luke, Orrell. His long and dedicated service will be remembered with gratitude and affection. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this time.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

A Farewell Note from Revd. Clive Doran

Dear friends,
As I come towards retirement this April, I want to say what an honour and privilege these past two years have been, serving as Interim Hub Leader of the NW Hub Parish and serving God alongside the people of Kitt Green, Orrell, Marsh Green, and Pemberton. I was asked to help the NW parish work more closely together, and I am encouraged that this journey has begun and that there is a hopeful and united future ahead. My prayer is that the Hub will continue to flourish in mission and ministry as they grow together in the years to come.



Working with the Clergy Leadership Team has been one of the greatest joys and blessings of my time in Wigan. The prayerful support, unity, and care you show one another have been deeply encouraging to me. As I look ahead to retirement, please be assured that I will continue to hold you all in my prayers. Thank you to everyone who has made my time in Wigan such a gift.

With every blessing, Clive

Working Together Conference

 **Saturday 16th May | 9:30am - 12:30pm**
St Thomas' Church, Ashton in Makerfield

We are excited to say that the fifth annual Working Together Conference will be taking place this May! This event is all about bringing together our frontline volunteers — the people who keep our churches safe, open, and working well, from churchwardens and assistant wardens to finance teams and local leaders. Reports suggest that there will be some fantastic speakers and possibly even bacon butties!

Invites will be sent out to those in the aforementioned roles soon!

Make a Difference this Lent

Are you giving up something for Lent?

This lent, turn what you give up into something life-giving. You could donate the money you save to the Next Generation team to help fund transformation in young people's lives. Let's Make a difference together!



Scan the QR code to donate, or email Christiane.cook@wigandeanerytrust.org for more information about how you can make a difference to the lives of young people this Lent.

Young Adults Group

Are you 18-24 and up for a new space to connect, eat, and explore faith together? We're looking to start a Young Adults group, and you're invited to help shape it from the very beginning. Come along to St Mark's Church, Newtown from 7pm-9pm on Thursday 12th March for the first official meet-up!

What's on this Easter?

There is so much happening across our churches this Easter that we don't have space to include every wonderful event and service here. However, in the run-up to Easter you'll be able to find a full list of events from across Church Wigan on our Easter webpage.



To view the page, simply scan the QR code or visit: www.churchwigan.org/easter

COMING UP IN MAR/APR! 

Turn over for a Calendar of events for the months of March & April with a link to the online Easter calendar! 



To scan a QR code, open your phone's camera and point it steadily at the QR code, making sure that it's clearly visible on your screen. A notification or link will appear—tap it to open the content in your browser or app.

Events

ACROSS CHURCH WIGAN THIS MARCH / APRIL 2026

Lifted Prayer & Worship Evening

 **Monday 30th March | 7:30pm**
St Nathaniel's Church, Platt Bridge

An evening of prayer, worship and stories about the ongoing work and impact of the 'Lifted' ministry and Food Pantries.

Wigan History Festival

 **Friday 10th & Saturday 11th April | 10am-4pm each day**
Wigan Parish Church, Town Centre, WN1 1NL

Come and soak up the history of Wigan and the Parish church. Visit dozens of stalls run by history and heritage groups. Enjoy a full programme of fascinating talks on both days - no need to book.

Warrington Male Voice Choir

 **Saturday 21st March | 7:30pm**
St Elizabeth's Church, Aspull

The Warrington Male Voice Choir are visiting St Elizabeth's church this March for a wonderful evening of music. Tickets cost £8 and refreshments will be served at the event. To book, contact Ruth on 07506 729292.

Coach Trip to See 'Top Hat'

 **Saturday 21st March | Evening**
The Lowry

Join the congregation from St Michael's, Swinley as they head off on a coach trip to go and see 'Top Hat' at the Lowry this March. Tickets £72pp (including coach fare). Contact enquiries@churchwigan.org for more information.

Quiz Night

 **Friday 6th March | 7:30pm**
St John's CE Primary School, Pemberton

St John's Church are holding a Quiz night this March in St John's Primary School. Tickets are £3 per person - pay on the night. Please bring your own drinks and nibbles. All welcome!

Easter Trail 2026

 **Saturday 28th March | 2pm-4pm**
Meeting at Aspull Library

Aspull Churches Together present this year's Easter Trail. The trail will start at Aspull Library and involve an Easter Story family trail, crafts and refreshments. The perfect thing to do with your family this Easter! There's even a certificate for everyone who completes the trail!

Lent Course

 **Tuesdays from 24th Feb - 31st March | 12 Noon**
St James with St Thomas Church, Poolstock

Come along to the St James Centre for a free simple Lent lunch and an opportunity with Rev Alison to explore the people around Jesus in the last few weeks of his life. Whether you want to come to all of the sessions, or just a few, you're very welcome!

Palm Sunday Walk

 **Sunday 29th March | 11:30am**
Starting at St David's, Haigh at 11:30am

Following on from the very successful walk at Christmas, St David's church will be hosting another community walk. The group will be setting off from St David's church at 11:30am. The route will be weather dependent, with a short option for those who don't want to do the full route. All welcome - even dogs! Wear your wellies or suitable shoes. Hot soup, tea and coffee will be available in the church afterwards.

The Start Course

 **Tuesdays from 24th Feb - 31st March | 10am - 12 noon**
St Peter's Church Meeting Room, Hindley

Looking for a simple, engaging way to explore the Christian faith? Then 'Start!' is the perfect place to begin! Interested? Contact Cynthia on 07539 703023

Tea Dance

 **Monday 9th March | 1pm-3pm**
St John's Church, Hindley Green

£7 including sandwiches, cakes & tea/coffee. For tickets, call Elsie on 01942 708964.

2026 Pantry Opening Times

The Pantry @ St. Nathaniel's

Open Thursdays | 9am - 12noon

The Pantry @ Christ Church, Ince

Open Thursdays | 9am - 12noon

Tom's Pantry @ St James', Poolstock

Open Tuesdays | 9:30am - 11:45am

Wednesdays | 9:30am - 11:45am

Saturdays | 11am - 2pm (alongside Faith Cafe)

Annie's Pantry @ St Anne's, Beech Hill

Open Mondays | 11am - 1pm

(Welcome Space / Cafe 10:30am - 12:30pm)

Ashton Pantry @ St Thomas Church Hall, Ashton

Pay-as-you-feel Cafe open Mondays 12noon - 1pm

Open Tuesdays | 11am - 12noon

Thursdays | 2pm - 3pm

Sundays | 3pm - 4pm

JEDS Pop-Up Pantry @ St David's Church Hall, Haigh

Open Tuesdays | 5:30pm - 7pm

JEDS Pantry @ St Stephen's Church, Haigh

Open Tuesdays | 9am - 11am

(Welcome Space until 12pm)

The Pantry @ Holy Trinity, Downall Green

Open Fridays | 9am - 10am

Aidan's Pantry @ St Aidan's,

Open Fridays | 11am - 1pm

Pop Up Pantry @ Marsh Green Library

Open Wednesdays | 9:30am - 10:30am

For a list of all events and services throughout Church Wigan this Easter, simply scan the QR code or
www.churchwigan.org/easter

