



THE FUNNY POWER OF GENEROSITY

THE RHYTHM OF DISCIPLESHIP



Written by Revd. Neil Cook
Team Rector of Church Wigan

In a moment of joy when reflecting on God's strange ways, Jesus exclaimed, 'I praise you, Father, for you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children' (Matt 11.25). God's generosity towards the small, the undeserving and the overlooked completely upends humanity's normal approach to life. When we choose to reflect our Father's generosity and do likewise, a funny power is unleashed that unlocks joy and unexpectedly blesses the one who chooses to bless.

Consider the story about Abba Macarius, one of the Desert Fathers who lived in the Egyptian desert 16 centuries ago: Once a certain brother brought a gift of grapes to Macarius - a rare extravagance for such a humble hermit. But, for love's sake, Macarius thought not of his own needs but of another brother who was feebler and more in need, and so he carried the grapes to him.

The sick man thanked God for the kindness of his brother but, he too thinking more about his neighbour than himself, brought them to another, and he again to another. Thus, that same bunch of grapes was carried around all the hermit cells scattered across the desert, and no one knowing who first had sent it, it was brought at last to the first giver.

Those who are generous testify to the way God blesses the one who blesses, even though the giver gives without seeking reward. The one who gives freely often receives freely, usually in surprising ways that brings great joy. This has given rise to the common saying, 'You can't outgive God.'

From 6th-13th July a team of mostly young Koreans will be in Wigan as part of Prayer Mission UK. Since 2012 Korean intercessors have given generously of their faith, time and treasure to come to towns and cities across the UK - not to instruct us, but simply to pray that our churches and communities may be refreshed in God's love. It's a humble offering that is unseen by most yet benefits us enormously.

Why do they do this? Ultimately, it's because they are grateful for the British missionaries who brought the gospel to their land in the 19th Century. In particular, they remember a young Welshman, Robert Jermaine Thomas, who gave his life to bring the scriptures to Korea. He was dragged from a steamer and executed before he could give a bible to even one person, his box full of Korean bibles strewn over the riverbank - a seemingly futile sacrifice. Yet years later, new missionaries found that Robert's bibles had indeed been read, and that a church was growing.

And so the sacrificial giving of a young Brit has, 160 years later, resulted in similarly aged Koreans praying through the night with passion and tears for the church and people of Wigan. What a funny power there is in generosity.

Generosity and giving is at the heart of the gospel. That's why it's also one of the beats in our 'rhythm of discipleship: pray-read-learn-rest-tell-serve-give. Make sure you hear Rev Steve Pierce at The Well as he shares his wisdom about generosity, and join the Koreans in prayer - all details in this newsletter.

Turn over for more information about upcoming speakers at the Well and for the Korean Prayer event schedule



The Well - Dates & Speakers

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

 **Sunday 2nd August | 7pm - 9pm**
St Mark's Church, Newtown

This July & August, we will be continuing our journey into exploring the 'Rhythms of Discipleship'; practical ways to grow in faith through prayer, learning, rest, generosity, service, and sharing our story.

Come along in July to hear Steve Pierce talk on Generosity and in August to hear David Banbury speak on serving.

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



St Thomas' Swift Response

Swifts must surely be one of our most iconic birds. They spend only a few weeks here in the UK in order to breed yet we very much think of them as "our" birds. Sadly, we haven't done a great job at looking after them. Climate change, changing farming practice, with a consequential loss of insects, and loss of breeding sites have all played a part in their demise. The latter issue has come about as more people have blocked up gaps in buildings which provided Swifts with access to nesting sites.



In collaboration with the RSPB and Wigan Swifts, our eco group at St Thomas' church in Ashton-in-Makerfield decided to do what they could do help address the loss of nesting sites by installing Swift nest boxes in the tower of our church. Swifts can gain access to the nest boxes through the louvres at the top of the tower but can't get into the tower itself. We are playing recordings of Swift calls to encourage them to explore our desirable residences. At the time of writing we don't know if we have any nesting Swifts. If not, there's always next year!

Fundraising

Thank you so much for your incredible generosity and support. Following the appeal from the Wigan Next Generation Team in February, your kindness has made it possible for us to continue this vital work with young people across Wigan for another year, through to July 2027.

Because of you, hundreds of high school students can access in-school counselling at the moments they need it most. Through the dedication of our amazing Next Gen team and volunteers, the good news of Jesus continues to be shared in schools and groups across our community.

We are deeply grateful for each and every one of you—your support truly makes a life-changing difference.

THANK YOU!

If you would like to continue supporting this work, scan here:



Or for bank details use this link: [Text](#)
Or contact E| christiane.cook@wigandeanerytrust.org
T| 01942 705260

Prayer Points for July & August

1. **Upcoming changes to our country's leadership**
2. **The Korean Prayer Mission this July** - for travelling safety for the Korean team and for an igniting of faith within our community.
3. **Surf Stage** - for the event to run smoothly and be a space where all experience the love of God.






Pray For Wigan! Korean Prayer Mission 2026

Recently, Wigan and its surrounding towns and villages have been the centre of national interest. But it's not just political parties that have been active here. Much more significantly, **the Spirit of God has been working, growing unity among our many churches and stirring up faith in the rising generation.** It's a moment of both opportunity and challenge - in the original language of the New Testament, kairos.

It is a time for prayer. And to help us, God has sent a team of intercessors from Daegu, Korea as part of Prayer Mission 2026.

Join the Korean team and people from across Wigan as we pray nightly for the renewing of the church and communities in Wigan.

The Schedule...

TUES		PRAYER @ ALIVE CHAPEL FORMERLY TRINITY METHODIST 14 FLEET STREET, WIGAN, WN5 0DS PRAYING FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH IN AND AROUND WIGAN	7PM - 9PM
WED		PRAYER @ THE SALVATION ARMY 2 SCHOLLS, WIGAN, WN1 3QJ PRAYING FOR UNITY OF THE CHURCH IN AND AROUND WIGAN	7PM - 9PM
THURS		PRAYER @ ST FRANCIS' CHURCH CITY ROAD, KITT GREEN, WIGAN, WN5 0HP PRAYING FOR A REVIVAL OF FAITH AND PROSPERITY IN THE COMMUNITIES OF WIGAN	7PM - 9PM
FRI		PRAYER @ ST PAUL'S CHURCH ST PAUL'S AVENUE, GOOSE GREEN, WIGAN, WN3 5LH BLESSING THE GENERATIONS OF WIGAN, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG	7PM - 9PM
SAT		PRAYER @ QUEENS HALL MARKET STREET, WIGAN, WN1 1HX BLESSING THE GENERATIONS OF WIGAN, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG	7PM - 9PM

You can attend the public Prayer Services from 7-9pm or join the team for their nightly 'Sanctuary Prayer' at Queens Hall. This is a less structured time in which you can rest in God's presence and invite him to stir up in you a passion and spirit of prayer.



Sports Chaplaincy Update

Sports Chaplaincy is often a slow burn. Trust takes time to build, which is why following Jesus in this setting is about more than just what we say - it's about showing up consistently, serving others, and being a friendly, faithful presence.

I believe this is at the heart of the work we do. Yes, we want to share the love of Christ with our neighbours, but a larger part comes down to following the example Jesus sets. In John 13, Jesus tells us to love one another, as He has loved us, so that all may know we are His disciples. When we go to our local sports clubs, this is the root of what we do.

We've recently started taking a pop-up stand to Laithwaite Park on a Wednesday with a few goodies to give to the youth, and the number of conversations that have arisen because of this has been amazing. We've been able to share bible verses, prayers, and laughter, all whilst being encouraged ourselves. We've had young people and their teammates come to chat with us about faith and have seen them take away different materials, like a cross bracelet, so that they can spread the gold where they go too, exactly lining with our vision of the impacts we want sports chaplaincy to have. Please pray for the growth and protection of the seeds being planted, and we look forward to seeing what else God still has planned.

  /ChurchWiganSportsChaplaincy

Mother's Union

Members of the Liverpool Diocese Mothers' Union joined celebrations at St Paul's Cathedral to mark the organisation's 150th anniversary, sharing a special day of worship and fellowship with people from Sheffield, Canterbury, Australia and the United States. The event highlighted the global reach of the Mothers' Union and the strong sense of community that has united members for generations.

During the service, candles were lit in remembrance of members unable to attend and to support the ongoing care of the iconic cathedral. The congregation also sang the Mothers' Union hymn, adding to the spirit of the occasion. Those who missed the celebration can still watch the commemorative service on the Mothers' Union Facebook page.



Welcome to Phil Brown

We are excited to announce that, this July, Phil Brown will be joining the Chapelfields Hub team as their Discipleship Lead. Phil has an extensive history in developing mission and discipleship in various communities and we can't wait to see what God has in store for him in Wigan. Phil introduces himself below:

My name is Phil Brown, and sadly lost my wife Helen 3 years ago. We have 2 children, Hannah and Will.



I was born and brought up in Huddersfield and the youngest of 6 children.

I have had various jobs over my working life, including working with people who have learning difficulties. I was then called to work for God and began training with Church Army in 2001, and was commissioned in 2004.

I then began work as a Pioneer Evangelist at St Hilda's Firwood and Gorse hill in Manchester Diocese, followed by St Michael's & All Angels in Newton, West Kirby and Chester diocese. I then moved to Sheffield city centre of Mission after which became fundraiser for Church Army liaising with churches and supporters of Church Army.

My passion is for people to come to know Jesus and grow in faith, and I am very excited & humbled to have been chosen to join Chapelfields as Discipleship lead, and looking forward to exploring and deepening our faith in Jesus together in order that we can tell others about him.

New WDT Team Member!

James Quayle (*Finance Administrator*)

We recently welcomed James to the Wigan Deanery Trust team and, even in the short time he has been here, he has made a huge impact through his role on the finance team! In his spare time, James is regular volunteer at the Ashton Pantry and is very much involved in the life of St Thomas' Church. Welcome to the team, James!



Congratulations to Dan Munro

Congratulations to Dan Munro on his appointment as Next Generation Team Leader! This is an exciting new chapter for Dan and the team and we are delighted to see him step into this role. His passion for young people and commitment to discipleship will make a lasting impact. We pray for God's wisdom, strength, and blessing as he leads.

Confirmation Celebration!

Congratulations to the 19 individuals, from Chapelfields and North East Hub, who were confirmed on Sunday 14th June at St Nathaniel's Church. We pray God's blessing over you all as you grow in love and faith on your journeys with Jesus.



Update on the Re-Ordering Work at Wigan Parish Church

The re-ordering work is now well under way at Wigan Parish Church! A skilled team of builders began work on the church just over 2 months ago and they have made some fantastic progress. **Some of the recent changes include:**

- The Mayor's Gallery Seating has been moved to its original location.
- New flooring has been laid & foundations have been secured
- Building work is ongoing at the back of church - further updates will be released soon about this.
- Original wood from the church has been expertly re-purposed to form a new hymn book area near the South entrance.



For a sneak peek at the ongoing work, scan the QR code.

COMING UP IN JULY / AUGUST 

Turn over for a Calendar of events for the months of July & August



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 JULY / AUGUST 2026

Strawberry Tea

 **Sunday 19th July | From 1pm**
St John's Church, Abram

Tickets cost **£10 per adult, £5 per child and £25 for a family ticket** (2 adults and 2 children). The Strawberry Tea includes strawberries, jam & cream scones, cake and unlimited tea/coffee. Get your tickets from St John the Evangelist Church, Abram.

Bright Days Silver Choir Summer Concert

 **Wednesday 8th July | 1pm**
St Thomas' Church, Ashton

The event is completely free and is being run by the Wigan branch of Age UK,

Music for a Summer Afternoon

 **Sunday 5th July | 4pm**
St Matthew's Church, Highfield

Come along for a lovely afternoon of music and song! At 'Music for a Summer Afternoon', the St Matthew's choir will be joined by the choir from St Matthew's Primary School.

160 Year Celebration

An Evening with Gilbert & Sullivan

 **Sunday 5th July | 7:30pm**
St James with St Thomas' Church, Poolstock

St James' Church present 'An Evening with Gilbert & Sullivan' as part of their 160 year celebrations! Tickets cost £10 and are available from Dennis on 07493 340871.

Little Stars Toddler Group

 **Mondays starting 07/09/2026 | 9am - 11am**
St Paul's CE Primary School

£2 for one adult and a child - additional children are 50p each.

Summer Smiles!

A few smiley faces from Summer so far! Can you spot yourself?



Evensong @ St Luke's, Orrell

 **Sunday 12th July & Sunday 9th August | 6:30pm**
St Luke's Church, Orrell

'Lifted' Prayer & Worship Evening

 **28th September | 7:30pm**
Venue TBC

Bryn Community Walking Day

 **5th July | 1:30pm for 2pm start**

Starting and ending at St Peter's Primary School - followed by a short service and family fun event.

Advance Notice

2027 Working Together Conference

 **Saturday 15th May 2027 | 9:30am - 12:30pm**
St Thomas' Church, Ashton in Makerfield

A date for your diary if you are someone who helps to keep your church open, safe and running. The next Working Together Conference will be on Saturday 15th May 2027. Feedback from this year's conference suggests that it was a highly valuable resource for all that came along. We would love to see you at next year's conference!

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