Church WIGAN
NEWSLETTER
November & December 2026

FAITH IN ACTION - NEIL'S BURUNDI REFLECTIONS - CHRISTMAS IS COMING! - GOOD NEWS

# 'FAITH IN ACTION'

## CARING FOR OUR NEIGHBOURS



**Written by Revd. Sandra Jones**
*Area Dean and South Hub Team Vicar*

**The coming months promise to be an exciting and significant time in my ministry as I prepare to be licensed as Area Dean for Church Wigan in November, having started this role earlier this year. I feel excited by this opportunity to serve our churches and communities in a new way, building relationships, supporting colleagues and working together to share the love of Christ across Wigan.**

Being an Area Dean is about more than a title. It is an opportunity to listen, encourage and bring people together as we respond to the challenges and opportunities facing our churches. I look forward to working alongside clergy, lay leaders, Deanery Synod members and the Diocese as we seek to be a compassionate and hopeful presence in the lives of those we serve.

Alongside this new chapter, I remain deeply committed to an issue that Deanery Synod looked at when we met in April of this year, No Child Left Behind. The No Child Left Behind campaign is rooted in a simple belief: every child deserves the opportunity to learn, grow and flourish, regardless of their family's financial circumstances. No child should have to face the school day hungry or struggle to concentrate because they have not had enough to eat.

Free school meals are about much more than food. They are about dignity, equality, wellbeing and giving every child the best possible chance in life. A nutritious meal can make a real difference to a child's ability to concentrate, participate and make the most of their education.

As Christians, we are called to care for our neighbours, stand alongside those experiencing hardship and speak up when people are being left behind. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus places children at the heart of his ministry and reminds us of our responsibility to care for the vulnerable. This campaign is one practical way of putting our faith into action.

I am delighted that the campaign will be going to Diocesan Synod when they meet in November, offering an opportunity to bring this issue before the wider Church and encourage a shared commitment to tackling child poverty and food insecurity. I hope this will raise awareness, build momentum and inspire churches to consider how they can support children and families in their own communities.

I have also been invited by the National Education Union (NEU) to speak at No. 10 North next month, contributing to the conversation about free school meals and the importance of ensuring that no child is left behind. I am grateful for the opportunity to bring a faith perspective to an issue affecting families, schools and communities.

As I look towards November, I am reminded that ministry extends far beyond our church buildings. It means engaging with the issues that shape people's everyday lives, working with others for the common good and ensuring that the voices of children and families are heard.

**Please keep the campaign in your prayers as it progresses to Diocesan Synod, and pray for wisdom and encouragement as I prepare for this next stage of ministry.**

## The Well - Dates & Speakers

**Sunday 8th November | 7pm**
St Mark's Church, Newtown

**Sunday 6th December | 7pm**
St Mark's Church, Newtown

We are excited to announce that **Bishop Jill Duff (Bishop of Lancaster) will be coming to the Well in November** to complete our 'Rhythm of Discipleship' Series by speaking on prayer. This is one you won't want to miss. It's a real honour to welcome Bishop Jill to the Well. With a passion for sharing Jesus, inspiring mission and helping churches flourish, she brings a wealth of experience and a heart to see people encounter Jesus.

Come along in December for our Christmas Well service. We are excited to join together as Church Wigan, on this day, to worship together as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

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

YouTube

## Neil is Back from Burundi!

Revd. Neil Cook is back from his two-week mission trip to Burundi with SOMA UK, and he has lots to share! Alongside a small team, Neil spent time encouraging, teaching and praying with clergy, their spouses and youth leaders from two Anglican dioceses.

He returned home inspired by the warmth, faith and incredible joy of the Burundian people, and hugely thankful for everyone's prayers and support.

**Scan the QR code to hear Neil share more about his trip, including a glimpse into what life on mission is really like in one of the poorest countries in the world.**





## Wigan Parish Church Update

**Sunday 29th November | Starting at 10:30am**
Wigan Parish Church, Wigan (All Saints)



The re-ordering project is very nearly complete at All Saints Church, Wigan (Wigan Parish Church). We can't wait to show you the finished work in the church, but until then, we have a date for your diary. To experience the newly re-ordered space in action, come along to Wigan Parish Church on Sunday 29th November for the Town Centre Hub Dedication Service (see details above).

## St Michael's - Silver Eco Award

Congratulations to St Michael's and All Angels Church, Swinley, on achieving the A Rocha Silver Eco Church Award! This wonderful achievement recognises your commitment to caring for God's creation, promoting sustainability and inspiring others to protect our precious environment. A fantastic achievement to celebrate!

## Youthscape Essentials Course

**Do you work with young people in your church or beyond?** The Church Wigan Next Generation Team are running a Youthscape Essentials course to help equip and encourage those working with young people.

**Wednesdays from 11th Nov - 16th Dec | 7pm-9pm**
St Thomas' Church, Ashton

This is a great opportunity to grow in confidence, develop your youth work skills, and learn alongside others passionate about supporting young people.

**To sign up, scan the QR code above. For more info, email Dan at dan.munro@wigandeanerytrust.org**

## Exciting News from our CAP Debt Centre

Since starting the Wigan Debt centre 3 years ago, we have seen **local people released from £317,000 of crippling debt**. We are delighted and thankful for recent funding from Awards for All, the Skipton Foundation and local donations the debt centre can now continue until October 2027!

### A CAP Good News Story

This October, our CAP Debt Coach and Befriender visited a single parent of three teenagers to discuss their journey out of debt.

They were able to bring a food parcel from a Church Wigan food pantry, giving the family some extra support at just the right time. One teenager was overjoyed to discover a box of tea bags because the family hadn't been able to afford teabags until the next payday. Making themselves a cup of tea made their day.

**If you require debt help please call 0800 3280006. If you would like to volunteer with or donate to the work of CAP in Wigan please contact Christianecook@capuk.org | 07479 707309 |**

# Welcome to Our New Next Generation Scholarship Students!

**Elizabeth Paine (Betty)**



Elizabeth is 18 and comes from Atherton. She enjoys walking, reading and playing board games. During her scholarship, she hopes to deepen her understanding of the Bible and develop further opportunities to share her faith and the message of Jesus with young people.

**Samuel Leech (Sam)**



Sam is 21 and comes from Preston. He enjoys music, games and TV. He is looking forward to all aspects of the scholarship, but in particular to helping with ministry and mission.

**Betty and Sam will be part of our Next Generation Team for the next three years; gaining valuable hands-on experience of ministry and mission with young people, alongside studying for a degree in Theology.**

# Cultivate

Cultivate courses have been running at St Thomas', Ashton and St Paul's, Goose Green over the past weeks and it has been a transformative experience for so many that attended. Cultivate is a 6 week course that helps church members sensing a call to reach out in mission in fresh ways to explore this calling and discern how it might look in their own context.

**Ros Unsworth attended the St Thomas' course and said about her experience:**

*"It made me feel more positive and feel like I can up my game. I've really enjoyed meeting new people with a common interest.*

**Lynda Lewis is currently attending the St Paul's course and she says:**

*"I've really enjoyed it - the presenters are knowledgeable, friendly and down to earth. It's thought provoking, but not overly difficult. It brought me back to why I do what I do.*

# The Chosen

Discover The Chosen, the acclaimed series bringing the Gospels to life through powerful storytelling. St John's Church invites everyone to enjoy an episode followed by refreshments and informal discussion, exploring Jesus' life, teachings and relevance today.

**Join one or all five Wednesday sessions at St John Hindley Green:**




**Wednesdays from 11th Nov - 9th Dec**
**7:15pm - 9pm**
St John's Church Hall, Hindley Green

# Welcome to Rev Carol Bates

Church Wigan is delighted to welcome the Revd Carol Bates, who has taken up the role of Team Vicar (Hub Leader) for Church Wigan North West.

Carol was licensed by Bishop Simon Robinson during a beautiful service at St Luke's Church, Orrell, on Tuesday 20th October. We are thrilled to have Carol as part of the team and look forward with excitement to all that God has in store for her and the North West parish as they begin this new chapter together.

**Scan the QR code to view photographs from the service.**





# Celebrating 385 Years of All Saints Church, Hindley



Congratulations to All Saints Church, Hindley, on celebrating its remarkable 385th Anniversary! Although the current church building hasn't been standing for all of those 385 years, the site has been a place of Christian worship since 1641. Here's to celebrating 385 years of faith, fellowship, history and community, and to many more years to come!

**The anniversary was celebrated at a service on Sunday 1st November, with local councillors present.**





# Faith Under Fire

**Wednesday 11th November | 7pm**
St Thomas Church, Ashton in Makerfield

Come along for a special evening with Major David Banbury, talking about faith and his experience of serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Scan the QR code for more information and to book.

## A Seasonal Update from St John Hindley Green

Scan the QR code for an exciting seasonal update from St John, Hindley Green about the past few months and the months to come

# CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

**Turn over for a Calendar of festive events and information about our pantry opening times over the Christmas period**

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 NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2026

### Chris Bannister Performs the Work of John Denver

**Friday 6th November | 8pm**
Wigan Parish Church, Bishopgate, WN1 1NL

Tickets £15 available from www.trybooking.com/uk/GWXD or reserve by text on 07973 802637

### Christmas Fairs

**Saturday 14th November | 10am - 3pm**
St Luke's Church, Orrell

**Saturday 12th December | 10am - 4pm**
St Aidan's Church, Billinge

**Saturday 21st November | 11am - 2pm**
St Thomas' Church, Ashton in Makerfield

**Saturday 28th November | 11am - 2pm**
St Andrew's Church, Garswood

**Saturday 14th November | 10am - 2pm**
St Andrew's Church, Springfield

**Saturday 28th November | 12pm**
St Anne's Church Hall, Beech Hill

**Sunday 29th November | 12pm - 4pm**
St John's Church, Pemberton

**Saturday 5th December | 12pm**
St Matthew's Church, Highfield

**Saturday 28th Nov | 2pm - 4pm**
St Francis Church, Kitt Green

**Saturday 21st November | 11am - 2pm**
St John's Church, Hindley Green

**Saturday 21st November | 11am - 3pm**
St Peter's Church, Hindley

**Saturday 5th December | 11am - 2pm**
All Saints Church, Hindley

Please check our Christmas web page for more fairs and events.

### The Big Table - Better Story

**Wednesday 11th November | 7pm - 9:30pm**
Ashfield House, Wigan Road, WN6 0BQ

Join us at The Big Table, Wigan, at beautiful historic Ashfield House. Enjoy a two-course meal, share stories, connect across communities and explore ideas for Wigan's peace and prosperity.
**Please note, this is By invitation only.** Interested in attending? Email enquiries@churchwigan.org to register your interest and enquire about an invitation.

The Big Table

### All Christmas Events

It isn't possible for us to list all of the wonderful Christmas events and services from across Church Wigan on this page, but we have a handy webpage for that exact purpose. Scan the QR code or visit the link below for a comprehensive list of events.

**www.churchwigan.org/christmas**

### Christmas Oratorio & Christmas Carols

**Saturday 5th December | 7:30pm**
St Michael and All Angels Church, Swinley

Join the Wigan Choral Society for Bach's Christmas Oratorio and make a joyful start to your festive season.
Tickets £15; children go FREE
**Tickets available from www.wiganchoral.co.uk**

### Trinity Girls Brass Band Concert

**Saturday 5th December | 1pm**
Holy Trinity Church, Garswood

Tickets £10. Contact enquiries@churchwigan.org for more information.

### Children's Christmas Film Night

**Saturday 12th December | 6pm for 6:30pm Start**
St John's Church, Abram

Tickets are £3 each and very limited, so book early to avoid disappointment. Tickets are available from church, message the St John Abram Church Facebook page for more information.

### 2026 Pantry Opening Times

**Scan the QR code for a list of opening times over Christmas and the New Year.**

**The Pantry @ St. Nathaniel's**
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