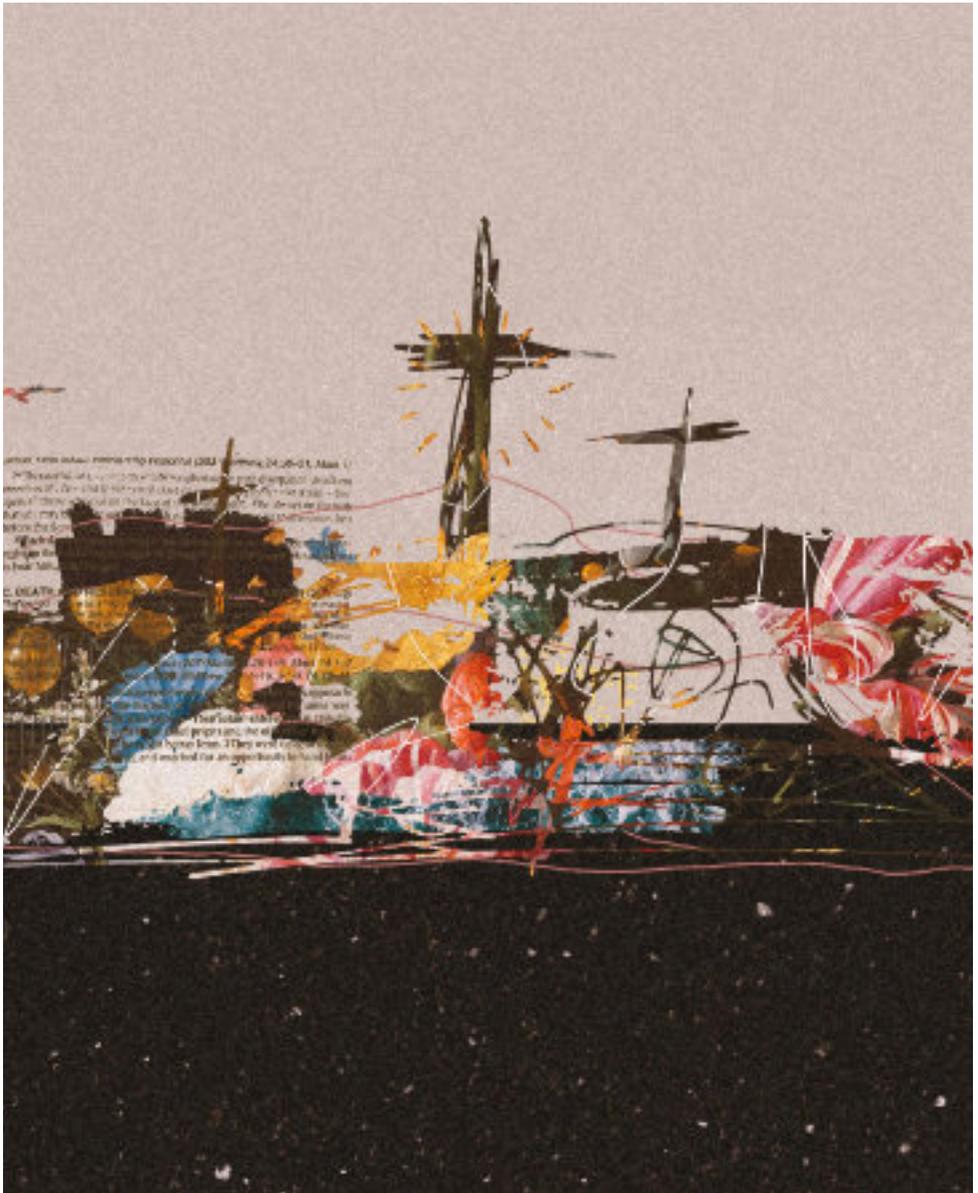


NETWORK

The quarterly magazine of St James' Church, Clitheroe



What's on each week?

Sunday 9.30am	Morning Worship In person only; St James' Church
Sunday 11.15am	Morning Worship St James' Church and YouTube
Sunday 7.30pm	Without Borders 3 rd Sunday of the month only
Wednesday 10.30am	Wednesday Communion St James Church
Wednesday 12 noon	Friendship Lunch 3 rd Wednesday of the month only
Kids and Families	Little Fishes: Monday 10.30-12 0-5 years, parents and carers Waymakers: Tuesday 6pm-7.30pm Years 3-6 Kingdom Kids: Sundays 9.30am and 11.15am 0-11 years Popcorn: 13th March, 4 th April (Good Friday) and 15 th May
Youth	Youth 412: Wednesdays 7pm-9pm Discussion, Bible Study and Worship Youth Club: Fridays 6.30pm-8.30pm Games, snacks and fun Sunday Youth: 11.15am Service only

NETWORK: MARCH 2026

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NEW SEASON, NEW LOOK

How do you respond to change? I'm generally ok with change, but can get phased by new tech! A few months ago, Naomi let me know that Publisher, the software we have used for some years for producing Network, will soon no longer be supported as part of Microsoft Office Suite. We've therefore now moved to Affinity, part of the Canva suite of software. There are so many bells and whistles in this package that I know I'm probably missing most of the potential, but we all need to start somewhere.

It's the same with change in any part of our lives. Do we dread it, fear it, put off facing it, or embrace it whole-heartedly. I know that for many of us 2025 had a mix of emotions as we went into vacancy after Mark Pickett's retirement. We prayed for 'more than we could ask or imagine', and – surprise surprise! – Father God has exceeded our expectation in calling Sam Cheesman as our new Rector. It has been inspiring to see Sam lead confidently through his preaching, pastoral care, team leadership and wider involvement in the town and diocese. No doubt there will be further changes to follow, but I know from all that's been said in the last few months, any changes will be focussed on declaring that 'Jesus is enough' and extending our mission to our immediate parish and beyond.

Do remember that we are always pleased to receive contributions from members for Network. Have you a faith story you'd like to tell (see 'Sydney's' story on page 18)? What have your small group been learning and growing in recently? What worship songs, books or other resources have inspired you and drawn you deeper into your relationship with Jesus? Please email your contributions to grahamhaldane@stjamesclitheroe.co.uk. Don't worry about formatting, and we can edit them for flow and length if required.

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens" (Eccl 3:1)

Let's make the Spring and Summer seasons ahead ones for drawing closer to Jesus and each other and reaching out with Jesus' love to those around us and beyond us.

Graham Haldane

Prayer events: March to May 2026

Thu 5 Mar, 19:00 Pray and Craft evening, St James' Church

Fri 27 Mar, 19:30 Breathe praise & prayer, Turret House

Mon 30 Mar to Thu 2 Apr Holy Week prayer spaces, SJC

Thu 2 Apr, 19:00 Maundy Thursday communion

Sat 18 Apr, 10:30 Parish Prayer Walk I

10-24 May Thy Kingdom Come prayer, Turret House

We also encourage you to pray regularly on your own, with your family/household and in your small groups.



CONNECTING

Partnership with purpose - Sam Cheesman

At the end of January, I visited King's Highway Church, our link church in Eldoret, Kenya. It was an absolutely wonderful 2 days spent with our brothers and sisters there and it was particularly good to be able to do so early on in my time at St James' to signal to them the importance of the relationship.

I have been involved in a number of parish and diocesan links before and was actually in Kenya working with our group of global diocesan links, which I have continued to be involved in from my previous role as Bishop's Chaplain. I therefore went with a key question I wanted to be able to answer for myself regarding our link: *'What is the purpose of our link with King's Highway Church?'*

Those of you reading who have been to Eldoret before will presently be shouting at the page in frustration that I would even ask the question!



*Sam with Bishops
Leo Paul, Multan, Pakistan;
Joseph Aba, Liwolo, South
Sudan;
Philip North, Blackburn, UK;
Dinto Letloenyane, Free
State, South Africa*



Sam with some of the men from the 'Movers' outreach ministry

Please rest assured that I too have come to the clear conclusion that the link with King's Highway Church must continue to be an integral part of our worshiping life together, and here is why:

Learning together

First, because we can learn so much from them, and they are all things we could really benefit from as a Church. Their expertise in church planting is unmatched by anyone local to us in Clitheroe, their ministry with those on the margins is inspiring and their ability to do a lot with very little is humbling. I was particularly challenged by how various practices which we often see as super-spiritual are, to them, part of their everyday life. They had just come out of a month of prayer and fasting. Both elements of this were taken extremely seriously and they could already show how it had change things for them in various ways locally.

Mutual caring

Second, because it is good to have a group of people who love us, care about what we are doing and pray for us consistently. Where that group is

located is of little consequence really, especially as we can talk on WhatsApp and email so easily. The fact that King's Highway Church seems to me to be absolute prayer furnace is an incredible gift to us and we must commit to praying for them in return.

The body of Christ

Third, because it is an ecumenical link located 4000 miles away which reminds us of the diversity that exists within the body of Christ and that we do not truly represent His body without each other. St James' Church is a church which reflects the area it serves, which makes it a beautifully diverse place in some ways but not very diverse in others. We should also be proudly Anglican, taking advantage of the position that gives us in the community and the historic formularies which determine our doctrine and practice. This allows us to delight in what is good of us (and what we can offer to others) whilst also learning from the richness of a history and practice that is not our own. Diversity is one of the strengths of the Church.

There are many more benefits to do with relationships, cultural experiences and fun (lots of fun!), but I am sure that you can see that I was convinced our link is something to be cherished and grown.

Planning for the future

So, what do we do now? Well Sam Johnson has been leading the link on behalf of St James' for a year now and has done a great job in setting



things up for now as well as planning for the future. There is a WhatsApp prayer group which Sam administers and there is a video prayer time monthly which anyone can join – please do be in contact with him if you would like to take part, it is a real joy. We will also organise more brunch meetings and services with a focus on our link in the future.

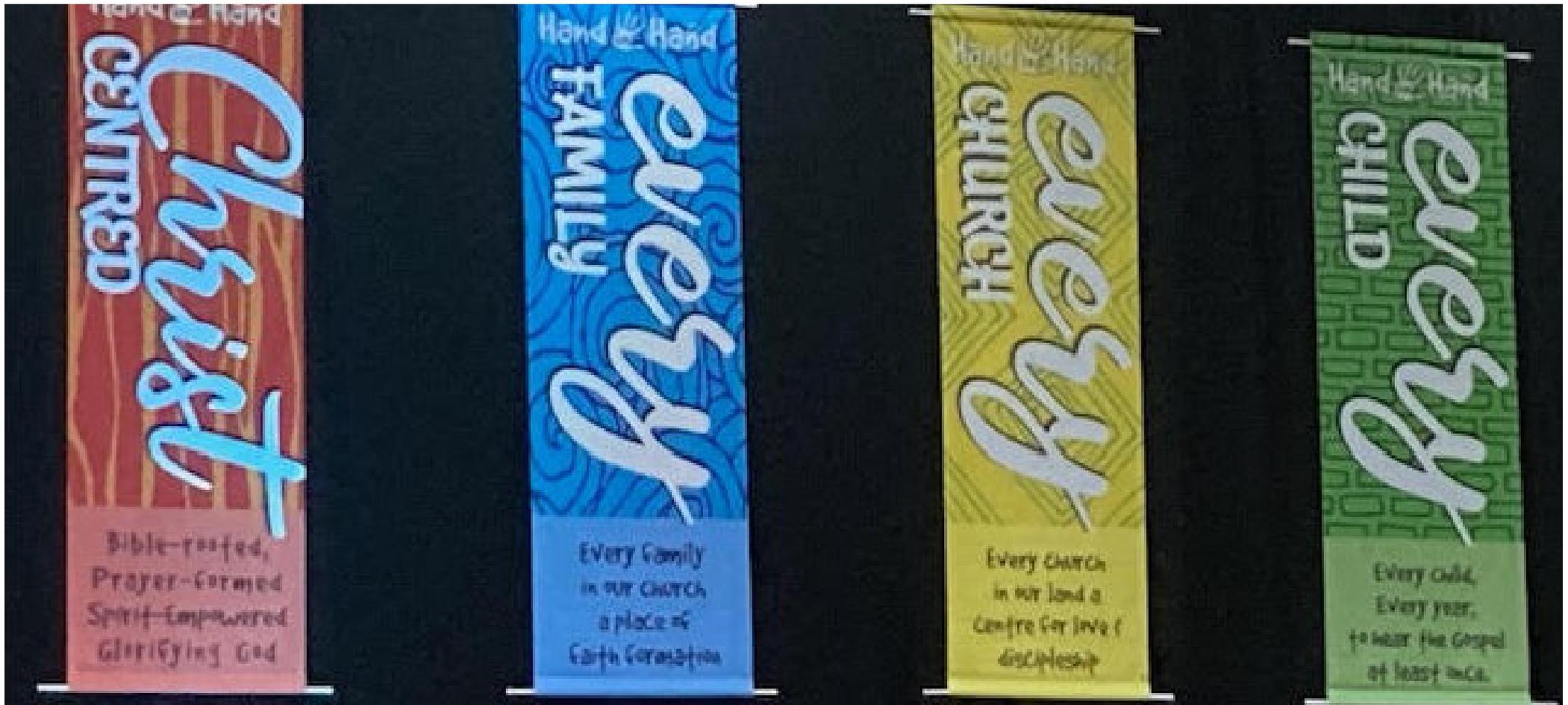
By popular demand, there will be a larger visit to Eldoret planned, likely for spring next year, but watch this space for further details on how that would work. Our Church school also has a close link with the Church School there and this is a relationship that will likely develop into visits from staff, hopefully both ways.

Possibly most importantly we want our sisters and brothers in King's Highway Church to feed into and, where relevant, lead our day-to-day life at St James' and we look forward to making the best use of modern technology to be able to



Sam with Krista, a senior member of staff at King's Highway School





Our vision for Kids' Ministry

Helen Potts

Children & Families Minister

I am always grateful for the encouragement and prayer support my God family at St James' Church give the Kids' Ministry. So, at the start of another year, I thought it would be great to take a page or two to share with you, some thoughts on why we do, what we do!

So, to do this, I'm going to pinch the vision of a conference I've just been too! Cheeky I know, but 'The Hand In Hand Conference' is an annual national conference for those in Kids' Ministry and their vision is the vision of all those who are called to this ministry. They have 4 large flag banners that share this vision:

- **Christ Centred:** Bible-rooted, Prayer-formed, Spirit empowered, glorifying God
- **Every Family** in our church a place of faith formation
- **Every Church** in our land a centre for love and discipleship
- **Every Child,** every year, to hear the Gospel at least once.

I love these banners and I found myself reflecting on what this looked like in Clitheroe and specifically at St James' Church. So, here are some thoughts.

Christ Centred: Bible-rooted, Prayer-formed, Spirit empowered, glorifying God

Bible stories are central to all our kids' work and that is a joy. Whether it's Kingdom Kids, Waymakers, Popcorn, assembly or Bible Diggers there is a Bible foundation to all we do. A Bible story or truth is being shared and those leading have Bible truths as the foundation stone of their lives. Amazing!

Disciples Stepping Out, our kid's council, recently organised a brilliant Bible Breakfast. Why did they do this? They wanted to do something where they could share Jesus and a Bible story with their friends.

All the ministry needs to be **soaked in prayer**. This is a challenge, but a necessity. Last year what a blessing it was to have so much prayer poured onto the kids' ministry and other ministries, by prayer warriors from our church family. I know the influx of new families was a result of this faithful, servant-hearted prayer. Please will you keep praying for more families

to engage with God and start faith journeys. We want the revival to continue. We still want *immeasurably more!*

We can only do what we do, in partnership with God, **empowered by His Holy Spirit**. We are weak, but our God is mighty. There is no other way. In 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 it says:



'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness' and 'For when I am weak, then I am strong'.

The greatest joy in ministry is that we are working for 'the glory of God'. In everything we do, in who we are, our greatest desire is to **glorify God**. What a



privilege that we should be co-workers with God and able to glorify our wonderful mighty God.

Psalm 86:12 says:

'I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify your name forever.'

Every Family in our church a place of faith formation

Families are the place God chooses for children to be **discipled**. It is a foundation stone of our kids' ministry that we support and encourage families to do faith at home; we also provide for them as families on Sundays and at other events. This is so important that Becky is going to be working specifically in this area. In church we have had worship bags for a while, but these are now revamped and there is more encouragement within the church service to help families worship together and to do faith together. We are so grateful to the worship team for including more child friendly worship songs and helping to initiate this.

Whenever we can, the **Kingdom Kids** team use the main teaching theme so that the week's theme can be talked about at home later.

We want to support families in our community to do faith together too,



which is why **Popcorn** is a family event, aimed at inspiring families to grow in faith together.

Grandparents you are incredibly important too. Supporting your grandchildren as they grow up, praying for them, bringing them to events and talking to them about God.

On April 26th, after church, Becky and I are running a **Parenting and Grandparenting for Faith** session, where we hope we can all encourage each other and inspire one another as we disciple the children we love alongside God.

Every Church in our land a centre for love and discipleship

In 1 John 4:19 it says, 'We love because He first loved us.' So, we love all those who come into our church.

Little Fishes is a community where parents and carers are unconditionally loved, accepted and supported. The amazing Little Fishes team do a wonderful job of supporting the families and sharing God's love in smiles, words and offers of prayer. However, we always want hospitality and love to encourage people to their first steps of discipleship. At Little

Fishes we are always invitational, sharing how Sundays at St James' are a welcome, friendly, safe place for all the family.

We want to encourage our **Popcorn** families to explore faith and start journeys with Jesus. At Popcorn we encourage families to undertake the activities together; there are questions for them to talk about and then at the end we gather around the altar for a reflection that challenges the families to respond to the truths they have heard. One amazing activity saw the children choosing Bible promises that their parents read to them and they read to their parents.

At **Waymakers** we encourage the children to respond to the truth in the Bible story using prayer stations. The children go around the prayer stations with a leader in a small group. Some of the responses are incredible, some of the questions the stations provoke are very deep and profound. We hope and pray seeds are being planted and starting to germinate.

Every Child, every year, to hear the Gospel at least once

- Every week on a Wednesday either myself or Sam take assembly at school. There are always around 300 children sat in front of us as we have fun sharing Bible truths.
- Every week at Bible Diggers there are 25 children to hear the Bible story,
- Every week at Waymakers there are up to 25 children to explore the Bible story.
- Once a month at Popcorn there are around 40 of us to hear a Bible story and respond to its message.
- Every week at Little Fishes there are 30 families, who at least twice a year hear the gospel message in the Christmas story or Easter story and who each week have a prayer of blessing said over them at the end of the session.

Thank you for your support and encouragement. Please keep praying for the work we do as a church with children and families. We can't wait for God to do *'immeasurably more'*.

Praise the Lord!

Psalm 150 instructs us to 'Praise the Lord' with our whole being... 'Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.'

Resources for worship – for everyone

How do you enjoy worshipping God during our sung worship time? As I look around our multi-generational congregations, every possible stance of worship is exhibited as we sing praises to God. I want to encourage you that egg shakers aren't just for babies and flags aren't just for the twirly dancers! A kinesthetic approach to worship can be for anyone! Our worship bags as you enter the main church have had a refresh and are being well used, along with worship resources found in baskets at the front of church. Please do enjoy the worship tools as much as our younger congregation members.

Half Penny Meadows

Events at Half Penny Meadows (just off Pendle Road towards the A59) are beginning to take place. An incredible outdoor carol concert started off our missional events on the housing development, and this has been swiftly followed by a Valentine's scavenger trail for families to

complete during the February half term holiday. I have partnered with a wonderful team of congregation members who live on the estate, and we are planning many family friendly events that will run on Half Penny Meadows - including an Easter Forest Church on Palm Sunday! Please join us in praying that God's glory and love will be shown through these community events.

Becky Wright,
Children's Worker



What dance can our Clitheroe primary children demonstrate?!

St James' Church invites you to...

POPCORN

A friendly, fun-filled space for families to explore Bible stories together.



Friday 13th March
Friday 3rd April (Good Friday)
Friday 15th May

Refreshments, Songs, Bible stories and craft
Popcorn cafe with drinks and after school snacks from
3.30pm
Songs, Bible stories, craft and fun activities from 3.50pm
St James Church, Clitheroe

www.stjamesclitheroe.co.uk/popcorn

CHANGING

From connecting to transforming through our youth ministry

**Lucy Skelton
Youth Minister**

With their permission, I want to tell you the story of one of our young people, who I'll name 'Stanley' for this article.

First steps – Friday nights

Our story starts a few years ago when Stanley walked in to our Friday night youth club for the first week. Stanley came along with some friends after they had all got to know me at their school lunch-time club, and had

been invited to come along on a Friday.

Stanley, like his friends, was lively, loved his sports and always seemed to be having a good time having fun with his friends. As time went on we noticed that when we had our group time on a Friday, Stanley was always negative about the idea of there being a God, often making it very clear that he definitely did not believe in God. As time went on even further, we did a half term on prayer and asked the young people if anyone had ever prayed. Stanley put his hand up and told us "I prayed for my brother to get better once and he didn't, so God isn't real or he doesn't love." We spent some time getting to know

Stanley even more and through talking to him found out about his brother who was struggling with all sorts of medical concerns. The longer Stanley came to youth club the more he got to know the other young people who came and who were part of our church family. He made some additional new friends and as time went on they shared their faith with him, supported him when he was struggling with things and eventually convinced him to come and try our Wednesday youth congregation.

Stepping on – Youth Congregation

Stanley's first week at our youth congregation was interesting for him; having not been to anything like it before he found it difficult to know what to do, how to engage and what it was all about. His friends who had invited him

were a great support, they looked after him, encouraged him and despite it all being very new to him he came back the following week, and every week since.

After a few weeks of attending, Stanley came excitedly up to me one evening at our Friday night youth club to tell me he had made a really big decision that week. I asked him what it was and he said, "I decided to follow Jesus". It was such a special moment. I took him over to get one of our Bibles that we give away to young people who want one and showed him some good things to start with. Since then, Stanley has continued on that journey with Jesus. Stanley came with us to Satellites youth camp last year, which gave his faith such a big boost as he met twice a day with so many other Christian young people in worship, furthered his friendships with the





rest of the youth group and really got to know the youth team. He has been attending Wednesday evenings every week since he started and recently began to attend our Sunday morning service. He has built a daily Bible and prayer time and has found that when he spends time with God he finds his anxiety and stress is replaced by God's peace. Stanley has just started practising with our youth band on a Sunday after church and we are loving watching him grow more and more in his faith with Jesus.

Help us on the journey

Stanley's story is just one story of transformation that I could tell you. Each young person that connects with our youth ministry has their own story and their own journey to walk with Jesus. They are all in different places on their journey, some have only just started coming to a club at their secondary school right through to those who have asked to be baptised after following

Jesus for a while. It is a privilege and an honour to be allowed to journey with them. This is such an exciting time to be part of the youth ministry at St James' Church, but as it grows our need for youth leaders also grows. We are in need for more adults to join the team, we want to give each young person the support and encouragement they need to grow in faith, but right now we are finding that we are really short on people who can commit to serving these young people and help to disciple them as they walk with Jesus. If you would like to know more about joining the youth team, what the commitment is and what roles we are needing to fill, then please get in touch with me. Please continue to pray for the young people who are connecting with our team through the various activities, sessions and events that we run. Thank you for all your continued support that makes it possible to support, disciple and encourage the young people.

EASTER

Holy Week Prayer Space

30th March - 2nd April

10am-9pm daily; Holy Communion 7pm-8pm on Maundy Thursday

Good Friday Walk of Witness

10.30am URC Clitheroe

Good Friday Family Fun

3.30pm-5.30pm with tea from 5pm

Easter Sunday Celebrations

9.30am and 11.15 with brunch from 10.30am

TRANSFORMING

New Season, New Look for Love Clitheroe

Naomi Lynas

If you've been around St James' for a few years, you might have noticed that last June was unusually quiet. Or perhaps not – we were right in the middle of our vacancy, having just appointed Sam, and right in the middle of our Year of Prayer. So perhaps everything just felt a little unusual.

Or perhaps you've heard whispers about plans for something coming up this June. Something a bit like the Barbecue.

Or perhaps you braved the rain and came along to Carols at the Castle where we announced the biggest event of the Summer...

Live at the Castle!

The Love Clitheroe Barbecue, our annual family fun day put on in partnership with other local churches and The Grand, is seriously upscaling this year.

In fact, it's not just going to be one day, but two – **Live at the Castle** on Saturday and **Church at the Castle** on Sunday.

On **Saturday 27th June**, we'll be hosting a day-long free music and arts festival on the Castle Field. With 5,000 free tickets, festival-goers can enjoy a main stage programmed with some incredible bands and artists, Arts & Crafts and DJ workshops, a World Cup Football zone, food trucks, a Bowland Brewery bar, children's activities and even a Festival Salon.

On **Sunday 28th June**, Church is heading to the Castle! We'll be having an open-air worship service where we're encouraging every single church in Clitheroe – as well as our whole community – to come together to worship God.

This is a big, bold, brave vision that we believe God is calling us to, to show His amazing love and grace to this town. We've secured £12,000 funding from Lancashire County Council, and with additional financial support from St James', Clitheroe Christians in Partnership and the Lancaster Foundation,



we've been able to take this big step.

As you can imagine, a festival weekend like this will take a huge amount of manpower. We think we'll need over 100 volunteers over the course of the weekend, doing everything from event tech support, kids' team, youth team, stewarding, litter picking, media and admin. We're aiming to have a completely different team for the Sunday, so if you can't help on one day, perhaps you could help on the other! We also really want the whole event to be completely covered in

prayer. We expect a lot of our local

community to come on both days – if they come on the first day and have a good time, they are very likely to come back on the Sunday. So that's multiple opportunities to hear the Gospel, building on the spiritual openness that we see every year at Carols at the Castle.

Finally, we need to secure a bit more fundi we don't have to keep spending out in futung to ensure we can do everything that we want to do! We really want to invest this year in great signage, décor and kit, so that re years, knowing that we're

unlikely to get such big grants in future. So, if you're able to help financially, please do let us know.

The Love Clitheroe core team is Meg Brierley, Sam Cheesman, Dan Finn, Ian Mitchell, Naomi Lynas and Dave Thornber. We've recently become part of Ribble Valley Gateway Trust so that we're not dependent on the structure of one church to run such a big event. If you'd like to know more about Live at the Castle, Church at the Castle or Love Clitheroe, please do get in touch: loveclitheroe@rvgt.org.uk

LOVE CLITHEROE the grand

LIVE AT THE CASTLE

LIVE MUSIC  

ARTS & CRAFTS  

FOOD & DRINK  

SATURDAY 27TH JUNE

For full availability of events: www.thegrandvenue.co.uk
Reception opening hours: Monday & Tuesday 9am-4pm (during term time)
Send enquiries to hello@thegrandvenue.co.uk or call 01200 42599

the grand

Welcome Lunch

Sunday 7th June
Please do book!

Try Preaching

Saturday 28th March
10am to 4pm

Hear some of the theology, theory and best practice behind preaching in a church setting.
Teaching, discussion and practice.
Have a go for yourself!
Tea, coffee and snacks will be provided but please bring a packed lunch.



Agents for transformation

Christians Against Poverty @ St James'

Knowing exactly what we are 'against' as Christians can be helpful to enable and enact change and bring Jesus' life into areas of our communities that are suffering. Matt Wood, our CAP Centre Manager, summarises findings from two recent reports.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation: UK Poverty 2026

Poverty rates by nation and region
Source: Households Below Average Income, 2023/24, DWP



JRF has recently published a report shedding light on the picture of poverty in the UK. Here are some of the latest data:

Here in the North West, we have one of the highest poverty rates in the UK, at 23%, trailing only London and the West Midlands.

- Over a third (34.3%–35%) of children in the region live in poverty, with rates in areas like Manchester and Oldham exceeding 40%. Roughly 7 in 10 of these children live in working households.
- Over 35% of children in the North West live in poverty.

- Manchester (44.7%), Oldham (43.6%), and Pendle (42.5%) have the highest child poverty rates.

The elephant in the room may well be that the Ribble Valley is one of the least deprived areas in the entire country, so to what degree is there need to fight poverty in our area? Throughout 2025 there were 3546 food parcels distributed by Ribble Valley Foodbank. Since the end of 2024, 15 people have referred themselves for Debt Help through our centre at St James' Church.

All of these figures relate to lives, families, situations, often with nowhere else to turn. Sometimes stats and figures can be dehumanising, especially when here in Clitheroe we are surrounded by areas that are 'worse off.'

Jesus says:“

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28)

This invitation to all breaks through geographical boundaries, local authority areas and postcodes.

Earlier in the Gospel of Matthew, chapters 5 and 6 show us more about how we can all come to Jesus and, from a place of learning together in His gentleness and rest, can be equipped to extend that grace and love to our enemies and the needy.

In Paul's epistle of unity to the community in Rome we see the instruction to: **'Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.'**

When we come to Jesus, so much happens, we can be equipped to be bringers of social justice in His name for His Glory and His Kingdom of love that has no end.

Stewardship: Generosity Report 2026

One indication of how this outworking can look is summarised by another recent report. Here are Stewardship's main findings:

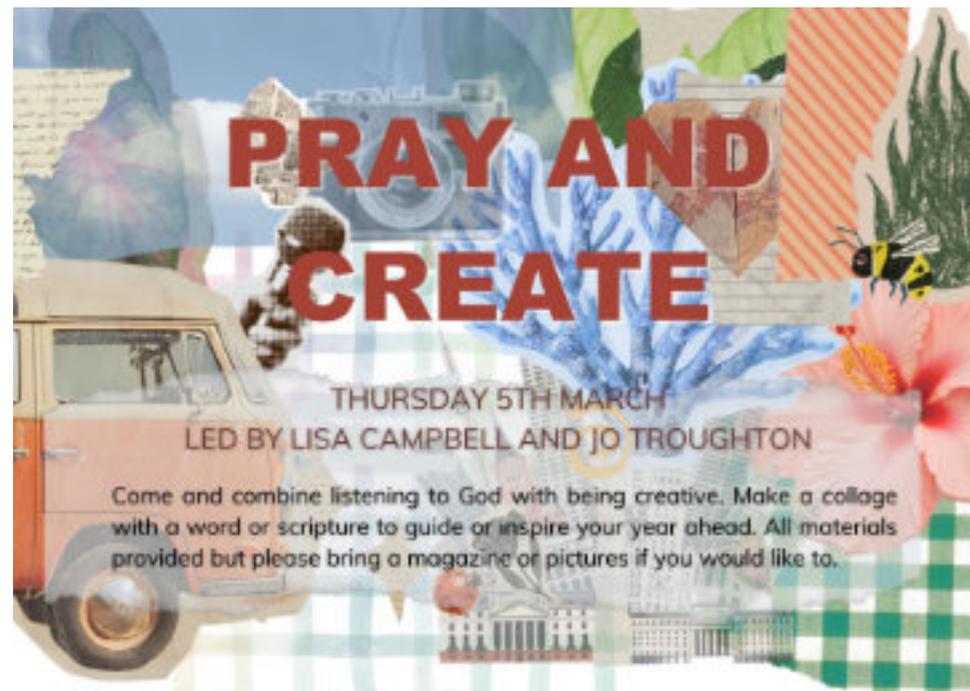
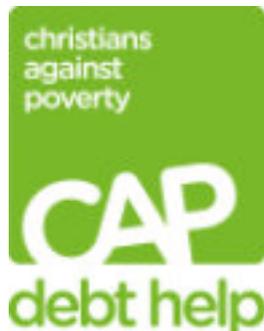
1. Committed Christians - those practising their faith at least weekly - give away over four times the UK monthly giving average.
2. Younger Committed Christians are the most generous - the 18-34 age bracket give the highest proportion of their income at 11%.
3. Trust in local church leads to greater generosity - 74% of givers to all causes are Christians who trust their church 'a lot'.
4. Regular teaching on generosity builds trust - 77% of those who trust their church 'a lot' have heard teaching on generosity in the last year.
5. However, Christian giving in response to prompts, including urgent appeals, has dropped by 11%.

In our community there are multiple ways we see Jesus's love filling hearts and equipping us to give our time, money and gifts to serve the community. Within ur CAP Centre the way we see God responding to prayer is awesome! In mid-February we prayed for more clients to be referred, and the next day a new client had made an appointment for us to see them. One of our prayer team members has been praying about becoming a befriender and will do just that with our new client. Our CAP Debt Centre is entirely supported by those in our worshipping community that give their time, money, prayers and gifts to bring social justice in Jesus' name to lives, situations, families and finances. Thank you, let's keep praising and carry on, in the unity, love and fire of the Holy Spirit.

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"
And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

(Isaiah 6:8)

Contact: matthewwood@capuk.org



WHO'S WHO



Sam Cheesman
Rector



Naomi Lynas
Operations Manager



Helen Potts,
Children & Families Minister



Becky Wright
Children's Worker



Lucy Skelton
Youth Minister



Matt Wood,
CAP Centre Manager

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Janet Sanderson (Lay Chair)

Jonathan Frank (Treasurer)

Naomi Lynas (Secretary)

Sue Clark

Graham Haldane

Ruth Haldane

Debi Hardie

Oliver Pettitt

Lucy Skelton

Andrew Stevens

Becca Thornber

Will Weston

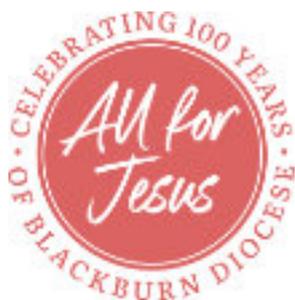
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