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Lancaster Road United Reformed Church



February 2025 Newsletter

Hello everyone,

It seems a long time since I last wrote a letter for everyone. We are well into 2025 now. The Christmas decorations are long gone but are those of you who had real Christmas trees still finding pine needles?

At the start of February (on the 2nd) some Christians celebrate Candlemas. Candlemas Day is one of the oldest feast days celebrated since the 4th century A.D. It comes exactly 40 days after Christmas and is the time we remember when Jesus was presented at the temple in Jerusalem by Mary and Joseph.

Simeon was promised, through revelation by the Holy Spirit, that he wouldn't die until he had seen the Messiah. In obedience to the Spirit's leading he went into the temple courts that same day as Mary, Joseph and Jesus. How must he have felt? Well apparently he was so joyful he told God he would now die happy.

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." (Luke 2:29-32).

Then we hear about the prophetess Anna. She also share the importance of the Christ child to all she met who, "were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38).

Simeon and Anna were discerning of the moment; they had their spiritual ears and eyes open to what God was doing. We need to be like Simeon and Anna especially in the days we live in. We can be so easily drawn into believing what society says is correct or what the culture tells us to believe. However, we need to listen to God because only his ways are trustworthy. Society's values change but Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

How do we listen to God? Like Simeon, we are blessed, as believers, with the gift of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us. We have also been gifted with the word of God and the privilege of being able to pray. We therefore have



	Duty Elders February 2025			
Date	11.15am	Notes	6pm	Notes
2nd	Clare/ Janice	Holy Communion		
9th	Beryl	All age service		
16th	Chris		Beryl	With Clay Hill Parish
23rd	Janice			

FLOWER ROTA

February

2nd Ruth Dewis

9th -----

16th Anna Drummond remembering Bill's birthday

23rd Beryl and Paul Woolley for their birthdays

March

2nd Grace Huggett

9th CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

16th Laura Marlow remembering Gwen and Don

23rd Whitmell family

30th -----

Lent Course 2025 – Journey of Generosity

This year's LENT COURSE will be held on:

Tuesday 18th and 25th March and the 1st and 15th April -
with 2 follow up sessions after Easter

(dates to be agreed when we meet in person).

10.30am at Lancaster Road URC (church lounge)

led by Revd Ruth Dewis

OR

7.30pm at Bush Hill Park URC (church lounge)

led by Mrs Lisa Hamblin

Please sign up if you want to attend the course. A booklet will then be sent to you as a pdf for you to print out (if required). If you would like a booklet printed out for you, please indicate when you confirm your wish to attend the sessions.



been given the means to listen to God but we have to be willing to receive the Holy Spirit's guidance and revelation, open Scripture to let the Holy Spirit reveal things to us and be disciplined enough to actually pray. God in his mercy and extraordinary grace speaks to us in other ways but we need to be discerning about what message we are hearing and believing. The only true way to hear God is through our prayer time with Him and how He speaks to us through his word by the power of His Spirit. We should all make time to read Scripture and quietly contemplate God's Word so we can hear His still small voice (1 Kings 19:12).

2025 gives us the opportunity to reorganise our priorities and put the old behind us so we can look forward to what God has planned for us this year. May this year be a year of putting God first as we are called to do.



Dear Father, Help us to be disciplined in our prayer life and in our regularly reading of Scripture so that we can really learn how you want us to live for your glory. We thank you for your gracious gift of the Holy Spirit who can awaken and transform our minds and hearts for such a time as this. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Blessings for February Yours in Christ, Ruth

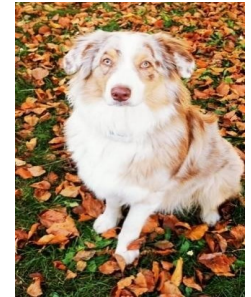


Quotes
'A Barrel of
J. John & Mark

February

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<p>3</p> <p>Toddlers Small Hall 9.30-11am</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Bible Study 9.45 Food Hub 10.00-12pm</p> <p>Prayer at Home 9.30pm</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Elders Meeting 10 - 12.30 Church Lounge</p>
<p>10</p> <p>Toddlers Small Hall 9.30-11am</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Bible Study In the Church Lounge 8.15pm</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Food Hub 10.00-12pm</p> <p>Prayer at Home 9.30pm</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>17</p> <p>Half Term</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Bible Study 9.45 Food Hub 10.00-12pm Prayer at Home 9.30pm</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>24</p> <p>Toddlers Small Hall 9.30-11am</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Bible Study In the Church Lounge 8.15pm</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Food Hub 10.00-12pm</p> <p>Prayer at Home 9.30pm</p>	<p>27</p>

Tuscany and Montevecchia Alta church in the distance at top of the hill!



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ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS

At the Church Annual General Meeting on Sunday 2nd March, we shall be voting to elect Church Officers. Nominations are required for up to 6 Elders. Elders that are still serving are Graham Carlisle, Clare Locke, Chris Marlow, Janice Luckett, Beryl Woolley and Jim Holliday (standing down at the AGM as Treasurer and Elder).

Please give prayerful consideration to whether you feel God is calling you to serve as an Elder in our Church here at Lancaster Road, or if there is somebody else you could nominate. Their consent must be received before their name is put forward.

Anyone who is interested in becoming an Elder can speak to Rev. Ruth Dewis, Rev. Martin Legg or any serving Elder and there is also a booklet published by the URC on 'Becoming an Elder' available in the lounge.

Nomination forms are available in the Church Lounge and should be handed to the Secretary by Sunday 23rd February.

felt somewhat dismayed as the property had been advertised as sleeping seven! Emma would not allow me to venture out (very wisely) to complain. It was late, there was torrential rain and strong winds, and I hardly knew any Italian. We made up a bed on the settee for Emma who insisted on me having the bed upstairs, even though I strongly protested. Fortunately, we had both brought hot water bottles with us. That was the start of our three-night stay! Having said all that, I must add I wouldn't have wanted to miss Tuscany.

Our cottage was set all alone, the nearest neighbours being the goats from the farm. Every morning and evening we heard the sound of their bells before they appeared, being chaperoned by the farm's collie dog. We appreciated local walks (all in heavy rain) with beautiful autumn colours, saw many native yellow and black lizards, hens and dogs, all running loose.

Our final night there culminated in a six-hour thunderstorm causing us four power failures. I think for the first time ever I was quite looking forward to returning to 'civilisation' and a few 'creature comforts'. I didn't find those elusive grape hyacinths, but Tuscany has certainly left another lasting impression on my mind.

I loved the sounds of the nearby stream and the goats' bells. I loved the natural surroundings, the mountains, the wildlife, the tranquility and peacefulness of the days and our log fires in the evenings. A perfect retreat away from hustle and bustle. Above all, for me, every experience is a bonus. I thank God every morning that I am alive, and that He is with me.

2025

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1	2 Morning Communion service 11.15am Revd Ruth Dewis
7 Shoppers Coffee & Warm space morning in the church followed by light lunch 10-2.30pm	8	9 Morning service 11.15am Mr Terry Silvey All Age
14 Shoppers Coffee Morning 10-12pm	15	16 Morning service 11.15am Mrs Lisa Hamblin Evening service 6pm @ LR <i>(Please note change of time)</i>
21 Shoppers Coffee & Warm space morning in the church followed by light lunch 10-2.30pm	22	23 Morning service 11.15am Mrs Laura Marlow
28 Shoppers Coffee Morning 10-12pm	1st March	2nd March Morning Communion Service 11.15am Revd Martin Legg

My European Extravaganza, Part Two

After travelling so many miles, or perhaps I should say kilometres, in a British style van from Enfield, to France, to Switzerland, to Italy, over the previous three days, Emma, Roxy and I made a mere five-minute drive from Emma and Sam's house to Osnago. Having just adjusted to being a passenger in a right-hand drive van, I now had to adjust to a European style left hand drive car. (Thankfully Emma is used to both, and adapts rapidly to the vehicles and the road layouts).

We enjoyed a varied and then very steep and rugged walk up to Montevecchia alta. At the very top is a prominent church which being so high up can be seen as a landmark for miles around. I had been looking forward to seeing inside some Italian churches but unfortunately this one was locked. However, we explored the very Italian looking, and at that time, tranquil village, being the only folk around. Returning to Osnago I encouraged Emma to let Roxy off her lead to practice 'recall'. This she did, and I discovered very soon just how good Roxy was at returning to us! Roxy careered full tilt at a gallop towards us! Emma nimbly dodged out of her way, but I landed in a crumpled heap on the ground entangled with a very large, heavy, shaggy, boisterous and rather damp dog! Fortunately, no permanent damage done, but I did keep well out of her way with further recalls!

The following day, after walking Roxy, Emma and I set off again. This time, bound for a three-night stay in a mountainous area of Tuscany. This was a region I had read about at school concerning beautiful grape hyacinth plants and it had left a long-lasting impression on my mind. After driving on a motorway for several miles we then entered the mountains. We knew our accommodation did not have a signal, but Emma had put the postcode into her SatNav.

However, somehow, unbeknown to us, the SatNav took us to the wrong part of the mountains!! The scenery was breathtaking – in more ways than one! I felt 'on top of the world' and before the mist engulfed us, Emma was out of the car taking photos of the spectacular views. However, as the light started to fade and both darkness and mist descended on us, the hairpin bends on the narrow, twisting shale and boulder riddled tracks with sheer drops to their sides caused us a certain feeling of unease.

Three hours later in pitch black, chilly and with no signal, the feeling intensified, fear crept in, and in Emma's case, frustration! We were hopelessly lost!! Eventually Emma left the car and me, and by the light of her mobile phone, climbed up even higher, in the hope of a signal. Meanwhile, outside the locked car, and worried about Emma's safety, I knew that from lack of food or drink most of the day, I was close to passing out! Not ideal! I lost count of how many 'arrow prayers' I sent that afternoon and evening, but they were all answered. Emma reappeared with satisfactory directions. I stumbled back into the car and devoured a banana and bottle full of water, and we very thankfully made it safely to our accommodation. Praise God!

However, on arrival the owner of the farm on whose land 'our' cottage stood met us and wished to see our passports and complete paperwork necessary in Italy. Already late, this took quite a while, and by the time she left, retreating down a treacherous track in her 4 x 4, Emma and I were ready for a quick snack and bed. I went upstairs to find my room. The first door I tried did not open. I put that down to my tired state. The other door contained a bed, and a rather overwhelming smell of damp!

Emma tried the first door, but no, it was definitely locked. The only further door was the bathroom, with damp towels awaiting us. We