

United Benefice Magazine – April 2026

Welcome to the April 2026 edition of your United Benefice magazine.

If you know anyone who would like to be added to our mailing list, please ask them to email UnitedBeneficeBMS@outlook.com or, for anyone who is not online, please phone 01254 937123.



St Leonard's Balderstone

St Mary's Mellor



St Leonard the Less
Samlesbury

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Reverend Nathaniel's welcome

I am very tempted to dive into talking about Easter, the hope and new life it brings and the great celebration we will have (not to mention the chocolate I am waiting to eat), but doing so would feel a bit like jumping to the end of the story, going to the last page to make sure everyone lives happily ever after when only half way through a book.

I am writing just before we begin Holy Week. As wonderful as Easter is, we cannot skip Holy Week to get there. We must journey through the Triumphant Entry of Palm Sunday, the clearing of the temple, The Last Supper, The Cross. The victory and celebration of Easter Sunday is only so great because of the difficulty of the journey to get there.

In our lives we cannot skip over the difficult bits, we cannot jump to the Easters, chocolates and celebrations. We will all face difficulties, sadness, uncertainty. In Christ, in the Resurrection, in Easter, we can know that God is with us and will bring us through. In her writings, Revelation of Divine Love, Julian of Norwich wrote "God did not say: you will not be tempted, you shall not be burdened, you shall not be distressed. But he said, you shall not be overcome" and that "all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well".

We will journey with Christ through Holy Week, through the Highs of Palm Sunday, with wisdom of teaching in the Temple, the anger of driving out the injustice of the money changers, the sorrow and pain of the Passion. As we journey though, we do know the end, we know the Easter day and the Resurrection that has already happened. While we walk the paths of our own lives, with the highs and lows, the celebrations and sorrows, we can do so knowing that Christ is with us. That Christ has already done the work. While we can't skip to the end, we know what the end is in the resurrection and life Christ brings. So, we can trust that "all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well".

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United Benefice church services

	Balderstone	Mellor	Samlesbury
Sunday 5th April	11:00am Holy Communion	6.30am Up the Hill 9.30am Holy Communion	11:00am Holy Communion
Sunday 12th April	11:00am Holy Communion	9:30am Family Service	11:00am Mission Praise
Sunday 19th April	11:00am Holy Communion	9:30am Holy Communion	4:00pm Even song
Sunday 26th April	4:00pm Forest Church	9:30am Mothers' Union Holy Communion	11:00am BCP Holy Communion

With the exception of Easter Day, we return to the normal rota system continues in April. The pattern of Services can be seen in the table above. If you have any questions then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Rev Nathaniel

Prayer diary

Sunday 5th April	Lord Jesus, give us the confidence to share the Good News of your saving grace with others, in both word and deed. Amen
Sunday 12th April	Dear God, open our eyes and hearts to see the needs of those around us, both near and far, and help us to meet those needs with actions as well as words. Amen
Sunday 19th April	Father, enable us to catch the vision and work with you in growing your Kingdom through new ways of being church. Amen
Sunday 26th April	Creator God, as you looked at everything that you have made and saw that it was 'very good', may we as good stewards, care for all of your creation as you would want us to. Amen

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United Benefice diary dates

Wed 1 st	St Mary's Choir Practice at St Mary's Church, Mellor	6:30pm
Wed 1 st	Bell Ringing Practice at St Leonard the Less, Samlesbury	7:30pm
Fri 3 rd	United Benefice Evening Prayer at St Mary's Church, Mellor	4:00pm

Tues 7 th	United Benefice Communion at St Mary's Church, Mellor	9:30am
Wed 8 th	St Mary's Choir Practice at St Mary's Church, Mellor	6:30pm
Wed 8 th	Bell Ringing Practice at St Leonard the Less, Samlesbury	7:30pm
Fri 10 th	United Benefice Evening Prayer at St Mary's Church, Mellor	4:00pm
Fri 10 th	Mellor Mothers' Union "Wine and Cheese" evening at St Mary's Church, Mellor	7:00pm

Tues 14 th	United Benefice Communion at St Mary's Church, Mellor	9:30am
Tues 14 th	Mellor Mothers' Union at St Mary's Church, Mellor	7:00pm
Wed 15 th	St Mary's Choir Practice at St Mary's Church, Mellor	6:30pm
Wed 15 th	Bell Ringing Practice at St Leonard the Less, Samlesbury	7:30pm
Fri 17 th	United Benefice Evening Prayer at St Mary's Church, Mellor	4:00pm

Tues 21 st	United Benefice at Communion St Mary's Church, Mellor	9:30am
Wed 22 nd	St Mary's Choir Practice at St Mary's Church, Mellor	6:30pm
Wed 22 nd	Bell Ringing Practice at St Leonard the Less, Samlesbury	7:30pm
Fri 24 th	United Benefice Evening Prayer at St Mary's Church, Mellor	4:00pm
Sat 25 th	Charity coffee morning at Samlesbury War Memorial hall	10:00am

Tues 28 th	United Benefice Communion at St Mary's Church, Mellor	9:30am
Tues 28 th	Little Angels at St Mary's Church, Mellor	2:15pm
Tues 28 th	Balderstone Mellor Mothers' Union	2:00pm
Wed 29 th	St Mary's Choir Practice at St Mary's Church, Mellor	6:30pm
Wed 29 th	Bell Ringing Practice at St Leonard the Less, Samlesbury	7:30pm

United Benefice Palm Sunday Service

A very inspirational and moving service was held at St. Mary's Mellor on Palm Sunday. It began outside the church, with Reverend Nathaniel blessing the crosses.



St Leonards Church, Balderstone

Balderstone Church Social Committee – Dates for your diary

This year, Balderstone's Walking Day will be held on Saturday 9th May. Everyone is welcome to join us for the walk from the Community Centre in Mellor Brook to Balderstone School and then enjoy refreshments and races on the field, or you could simply join us down at school.

We are also starting to organise our Open Gardens month which will run from 13th June to 11th July. If you have a garden you'd love to share with everyone, big or small, please let us know. It doesn't have to be perfect, Open Gardens month is all about getting together and sharing our beautiful outdoor spaces. Contact me for more details and look out for more information about both these events nearer the time.

Sian Riddell (on behalf of the Social Committee)

Balderstone Mothers' Union

There was lots of laughter at our March meeting, it was our quiz afternoon. Judging by the little quips and funny comments, a good time was had by all. Ruth scored the most, closely followed by Janet and Maureen. A very good afternoon. Thank you to Patricia and Olwyn for providing our biscuits.

Please note our April meeting has had to be changed to 28th when Janet will be talking about the singer Kathleen Ferrier. Janet is always so interesting so do come along, everyone welcome. 2:00pm at 11 Long meadow.

The MU Deanery Festival is on Wednesday May 6th at St Cuthbert's, Darwen commencing at 7:00pm. Please contact me if you wish to attend.

Susan Baron.

Mellor St. Mary's

World Day of Prayer

Friday 6th March saw over 50 people come together at St Mary's for the Annual World Day of Prayer service which is traditionally held on the first Friday of March each year and is prepared by a different country each year. This year it was Nigeria (last year it was the Cook Islands and next year it is the USA). Together with Christian communities across the world, we shared with Nigeria the difficulties being experienced by women, especially widows, and also the hope and strength they found in prayer, worship and community.

Following the service, which was shared with friends from Mellor Methodist Church, St Mary's RC Church, Osbaldeston, and the three United Benefice churches, there was a feeling that our churches should come together more often to share worship.

After the service more than 35 people shared lunch at the Millstone with continued fellowship together. Next year we will come together at St Leonard's, Balderstone to share the service from the USA.



Little Angels

We met twice in March; on the 3rd when the children planted cress seeds in empty egg shells. We were all delighted to see how they had grown on Mothering Sunday.



On the 24th the children made and painted a model of a cross, and searched for and found crosses all over the church.



We meet again on 28th April, which will be our 28th birthday! Time to celebrate.

Happy Easter to all our friends xx

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Mellor Mothers' Union

Margaret Ashton opened our meeting on 10th March and, after prayers, informed members of upcoming events and enrolled a new member. Our speaker for the evening was Jane Bury, a long standing friend of MU and retired vicar. Jane has spoken in the past about the areas and situations undertaken within her role and one of her main duties and responsibilities is co-ordinating funerals.

We heard about how funerals usually go to plan, however occasionally there are little problems such as when people arrive at the wrong funeral and how the weather is not her friend as she tries to say prayers at a graveside, dripping wet and windswept. Her memories were varied, including a few humorous moments and some poignant and emotional ones, however, her most memorable and one which made newspaper headlines, was when, during a service at Blackburn crematorium, Jane and mourners were evacuated as a fire had broken out on the roof where repairs were being undertaken. The crematorium remained closed for a number of weeks following this incident.

Jane went on to say her planning of a funeral is made much easier, and how important it is, if clear instructions are previously set in place so the vicar and family are able to follow choices and wishes. Jane gave us "order of service" sheets and some members chatted between themselves about the points noted on it.

Frances Jackson then thanked Jane for her talk and presented her with a pot of spring plants, saying everyone would go home thinking of hymns and prayers they may want.



The evening ended with a party atmosphere, as flowers and a birthday cake were presented by Margaret Baldwin to Margaret Ashton on her extra-special birthday from all the members, and after raising a glass of prosecco and singing happy birthday, Rita Gorman read out a poem she had penned to mark the occasion. We all gave Margaret our best wishes.

Margaret, the MU branch leader, welcomed Linda to our Mellor Mothers' Union Branch.



Frances Jackson

Everyone will be welcome to join us in Church for a Wine & Cheese Evening on Friday, April 10th at 7p.m.. Tickets £5. Raffle and entertainment.

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Mellor's Marvellous Musical Melodies

St. Mary's Mellor Church Choir invite you to come along and join in the singing at our Mellor's Marvellous Musical Melodies evening, at 7:00pm on Friday, May 15th. There will be entertainment from the Church Choir, Day School Children, and Balderstone Brass Band.

There will be Refreshments and a Raffle. Tickets £5. Everyone will be welcome.

The Card Ladies

Once again it is time to thank you all for the wonderful support you give us. We have been able to donate £25 to the Marie Curie Charity this month, and we will be making a donation to the Mothers' Union as they raise funds towards their support of Mary Sumner House, their headquarters.

We also wish to thank you for buying so many of our Easter cards and Easter-themed gifts, it really was very generous of you all. Thank you again!

The Card Ladies

St Leonard the Less, Samlesbury

Love Stories: Real people whose love of God enables them to make a significant difference to other people's lives.



Tim Morfin.

Did you ever watch the film called Bank of Dave? Well Tim's story is quite similar. He was born in East Yorkshire and moved to Bradford to study at university. He'd grown up in a very Christian home as his parents were part of the leadership team of a church plant in a council housing estate called Bransholme. Tim was always very involved in this church life and so he found a local church when he went to university.

He joined a church in Bradford with a real heart for their community. A fellow member of the congregation called Philip Haigh, launched a community café because they were aware that their church was in one of the most deprived areas in the country. This café quickly became a community hub, with luncheon clubs for the elderly and toddler groups. Tim got involved with the youth work as a volunteer. He says: My faith was being stretched as I spent time with people who prayed long and expected God to answer, and got involved in a way that cost time, money, energy and a fair amount of heartache.

This volunteering to support disadvantaged children, who suffer from considerable neglect and had no support from adults, eventually led to the formation of a charity called Transforming Lives for Good. At first, it was to be a local thing in Bradford run on a shoestring, but it has become a national endeavour, although there is still never enough income or volunteers! <https://www.tlg.org.uk/> Basically, the charity finds and supports volunteers who mentor those children which the education system finds hard to reach. Children whose behaviour means they're often excluded from the classroom or who truant, those who have faced trauma in their lives and those whose upbringing is on such a tight budget that they don't get enough to eat. Each of them gets a mentor who will help them manage their issues and in so doing improves their educational outcome. It's the hand that makes a difference to thousands of children. Local people serving locally.

In 2025 Tim Morfin was awarded an OBE by King Charles for his part in setting up TLG.

1 Thessalonians 4: 4. The one who calls you is faithful.

Tim says that it is calls- present tense- meaning that God offers us a constant guiding and instruction. Tim is sure that when you start an endeavour with God, he carries you through.

Pam Daunton.

United Benefice Community News and Events

Mellor Village Hall

Regular Classes and Groups at Mellor Village Hall

If you are interested in any of the following activities, please click on the link below to find out more about the regular classes and groups at Mellor Village Hall.

Girl Guides - Knit and Natter - Line Dancing - Singing - Indoor Bowls - Walking Netball
Walking Football - Dog Ways - Genjitsu - Badminton - Mellor Tots - Aerobics - Gaming Night
Yoga - Ukulele Lessons - Arts and Crafts - Balderstone Brass Band - Saturday Café - Pickle Ball

<https://www.mellorvillagehall.org.uk/classes-groups>

Samlesbury Area Civic Society

The Civic Society would like to confirm that the society will again in selling our home-grown tomatoes from the little table next to the Memorial Hall. This year we have extended our range of tomatoes and also confirm that they will be sold at the same price as last year, (only £1.50 per plant.)

As last year all the sales of these plants will go to help us run the community garden and make the hanging baskets around the Hall. It is only with your help that we can continue to do this.

Should anyone want to come and help us, please contact John Evans 07962 121 678 or John Greaves 07910 235 256, when you would be made very welcome.

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United Benefice Contacts

St Leonard's Church, Balderstone

Churchwardens: Mary Shorthouse – mary.shorthouse@outlook.com – 07880 715 547
Ryan Dixon – ryandixon466@gmail.com - 07976 323 221
PCC Secretary: Kathy Evans - kabelliveau@btinternet.com
Treasurer: Keith Roberts
Headteacher: Victoria Gow - 01254 769 150

St Mary's Church, Mellor

Churchwardens: Sarah Lees - sarahlucy93@hotmail.co.uk - 07450 295 417
Lloyd Brown – 07714 791 256
PCC Secretary: Ann Doolan - anndoolan@btinternet.com - 07969 047 984
Treasurer: Mary Brown – 07832 625 646
Headteacher: Jo Embley-Peers - 01254 812 581

St Leonard the Less Church, Samlesbury

UB Licensed Lay Minister: Canon Pam Daunton - 01772 877 017
Churchwardens: Paul Daunton - 07979 496 499
John Eastham - 01772 877 076
PCC Secretary: Dr Nick Buckley – nickb2505@gmail.com - 07542 762 941
Treasurer: Gaynor Dockerill - 07563 262 784
Co-Headteachers: Lucy Sutton & Louise Quayle - 01772 877 200

United Benefice

Administrator: Andrew UnitedBeneficeBMS@outlook.com
Vicar: Nathaniel Gilmour rev.n.gilmour@gmail.com - 01254 937 123

Useful Website Links

Our United Benefice <https://www.facebook.com/BMSBenefice>

St Leonard's Church, Balderstone <https://www.facebook.com/balderstonestleonards>
<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11534/>

St Mary's Church, Mellor <https://www.facebook.com/mellorparishchurch>
<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11535/>
<https://www.mellorparishchurch.org/>

St Leonard the Less Church, Samlesbury <https://www.facebook.com/stleonardlessamlesbury>
<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11517/>

Blackburn Cathedral <https://blackburncathedral.com/>

Mellor Brook Community Centre <https://mellorbrook.org/>

Mellor Village Hall <https://www.mellorvillagehall.org.uk/>

Samlesbury War Memorial Hall <https://www.samlesburymemorialhall.co.uk/>

Whalley Abbey <https://www.whalleyabbey.org>

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Magazine Adverts

For full contact details of the businesses listed below, please view their adverts in our two advert supplements.

An advert costs just £25 for 12 months.

To join our community of advertisers and place an advert, please contact the United Benefice Office by emailing unitedbeneficebms@outlook.com

A&G Chimney Sweeps	07944 099 871
Absolute Enigma Studio	07817 398 494
Andrew Ball Plumbing & Heating Ltd	07817 844 002
Balderstone Logs	07976 323 221
Ben Lewis Tree Services	07843 018 973
Bowland IT Support Services	01254 947 082
Bowland Vets	01254 311 311
Canberra Fitness Centre	01254 765 084
Community Ukes	01254 813 210
C P Simm Fencing & Landscaping	07807 337 717
Creations Gardening Services	07950 242 171
Crochet Classes & Tuition with Keely Robertson	07904 590 552
D.J. Worcester Chimney Sweep	01772 616 467
Evabel Sundecks	01254 813 089
Fabric Box	07712 413 904
Fired 4 U (Paint, Pottery and Clay Studio)	01772 203 060
G.Cross Agricultural Engineering Ltd	07802 278 525
GO Driver Training	07931 316 109
Hair By Amy Campbell	07770 238 258
Hatha Yoga – Live Yoga UK with Blair	07511 591 880
Heritage Café at Samlesbury Hall	01254 812 010
Hoghton Contractors: David Devaney	07887 843 085
Hoghton Village Vet	01254 782 737
Home Care Mellor	01254 689 981
Homewise Society: Home Improvements Handyperson	01254 232 249
Hoze-It Power Cleaning Services	07841 348 290
Ian Wilde Independent Funeral Directors	01772 902 345
James L Knowles Electrician	01772 877 469
Jane's Hairstylist	01254 812 677
Let's Foster Carers (Mike Dixon)	07855 963 740
Lilac Tree Interiors at Holland House Garden Centre	07714 794 623
Mellor Brook & District Community Centre	07436 271 153
Mellor Plant UK	01254 812 937
Mellor Pharmacy	01254 812 999
M J Barton Contractors	07999 711 926
M W Holdsworth Builder & Property Repairer	07970 200 371
My Adventure Campers	07383 449 449
N & T Construction	07503 053 375
North West Autocare	01772 314 873
NSS News	01772 455 421
Old Oak Farm Nurseries Garden Centre	01254 852 065
Pennine Service Station Ltd	01254 812 715

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Peter Whalley Plasterer	07709 673 310
Pete's Sports Massage	07584 655 855
Preston Garden Services Ltd	07855 974 540
Promedica 24 Care At Home	01254 411 004
Red Rose Insurance Solutions	01254 790 796
Ribble Home Surveys	07764 490 589
Right At Home Carers	01254 658 899
Samlesbury Secure Dog Run	07798 575 750
Stones Young Estate Agents	01254 682 470
Stove Installer	07787 858 585
Stuart Taylor International Ground Care & Trailers	01254 813 175
Taylor's Chippy	07999 192 884
T.Forrest Pet Food	01254 852 873
The Old Coach House Antiques and Interiors	07598 878 498
The Retro Bungalow	01254 852 723
The Wilpshire Clinic	01254 246 144
Tiggis Italian Restaurant	01254 769 133
Wherry Gardens – Bespoke Garden Maintenance	07508 455 694
Wilpshire Dental Clinic	01254 205 529
W.M.Alty & Sons Ltd: The Alty Funeral Service	01254 503 240
X-Press Ironing Services	07712 413 904