

Dear Friends,

We've survived the heatwave – another one due, I fear -and even the church got warm.

A Pastoral Letter from me is long, long overdue. I don't know if anyone reads them. In any case they are a useful taking stock and reflecting time for me.

I'll just top and tail the last few months from after the clocks went forward.

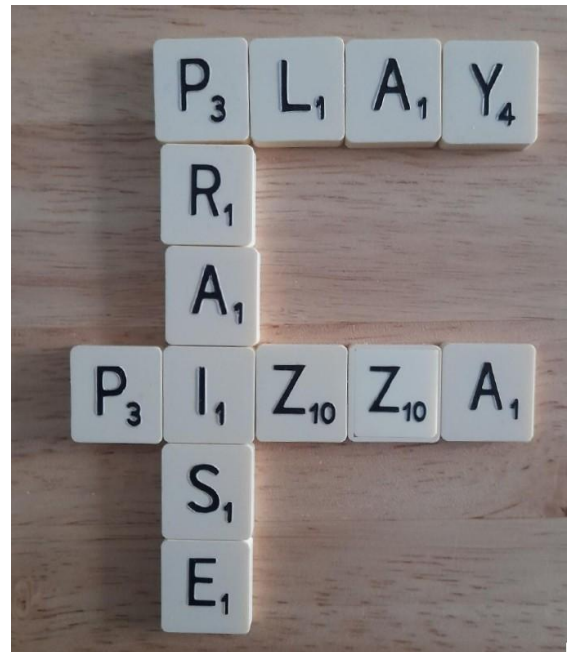
Let there be light.

Great news that the electrical problems at the East End of the church are now fixed. Bown Electrical did a super job, and even supplied their own mobile tower for the work in the chancel vault. Thanks to the delays, we lost the remaining £2100 from our 2025 grant allocation for running repairs; the Listed Place of Worship VAT Grant Scheme was due to close anyway, but all the funds had gone long before than; and diocesan buildings grants were reduced in 2026 from 50% of eligible costs for work to 25%, and from £20,000 to £15,000. Anyway, the work is done. We will certainly ask Bown tender for the complete rewiring of the building in due course.

Although we had a slight knock back from the Heritage Lottery Fund after our expression of interest to apply for a grant for £2.13m the door was not slammed shut; and we are awaiting a response to our expression of interest to Historic England to apply for a grant for just over £500k. Forget fingers crossed: pray!

Praise be

We launched *Play, Praise and Pizza* this term, an after-school club aimed for now at Yrs 5 and 6 at All Saints School. The Yr 5s will become Yr 6, and we hope the present Yr6s will pop in when they become Yr 7s. It's been fun. There has been much play and pizza. We're working on the praise. That said, being happy is praise to God anyway.

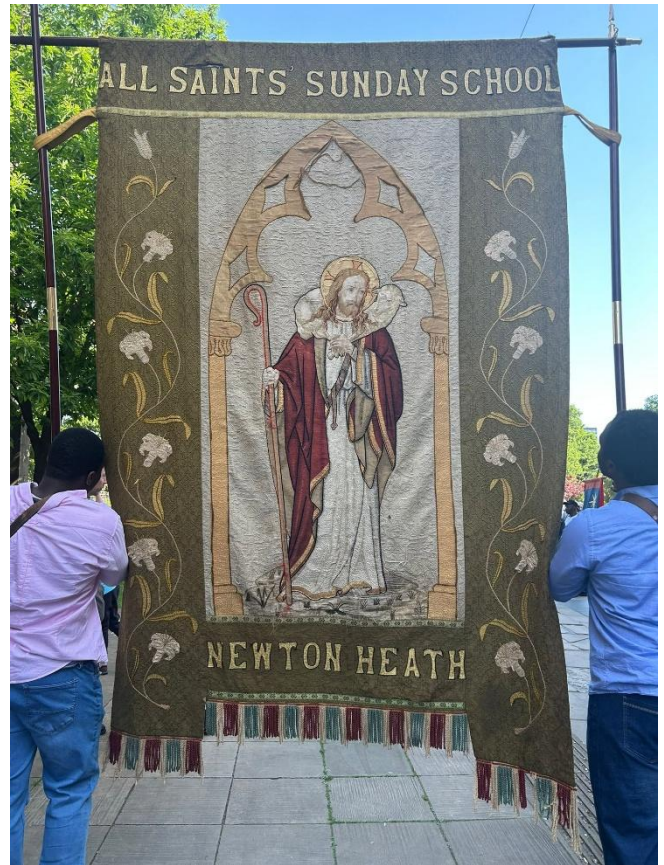


Help!

Our annual church meeting on 24th May was very well attended. Unfortunately, we were unable to return any Church Wardens. This is a concern if this continues to happen. To be fair, on paper a Church Warden's role is huge. Very few churches have Wardens who can "fill the brief" in its entirety without additional delegation. It's a job into which to grow, supported by other members of the Parochial Church Council, to ensure that what we need to do, as a place of worship and mission, and as an unincorporated charity, gets done. Ultimately the buck rests with the Rector! Clergy come and go. This Rector has stayed longer than average, now with retirement on the horizon, and wishes to leave a church community able to function properly until a new priest comes. If church life behind the scenes interests you, The Rector is all ears!

The Royal Banners forward go.

Thanks to a very generous donation we have a very fine banner frame, which made its debut at the Manchester and Salford Whit Walk, May 25th. Our largest and oldest banner was paraded; and the frame can also accommodate our smaller banners without stretching them. Thanks to Isaac and Emmanuel for carrying it, on what was a very hot day. TV Vicar, the



Reverend Kate Bottley preached powerfully, and commendably briefly, at the act of worship in front of the Central Library. I'd not seen her in a while, and it was good to catch up! Thank you to all those of who walked. It was great that our place was restored in the order, the first church behind the cathedral. Our Facebook post, including some video received the most likes of any post in the ten years of the account. Have you added us on Facebook?

The end of term is upon us. CGSEs and A-levels are petering out, and SATS are very firmly in the rear-view mirror. Let us pray for our young people who are preparing to enter the next stage of their education, and grow into the human beings God wills them to be. The Church will be hosting Year

6 Leavers services for St Wilfrid's and All Saints Schools, just before the end of term.

Silver Jubilee

Today, 1st July, I celebrate the 25th anniversary of my ordination as a priest at Lincoln Cathedral (I was made a Deacon in 2000) and it has been my joy to spend nearly 16 of those years with you here. On Sunday there will be bubbles and cake after the 10.00 am service. I heard only the other day that my sister and brother-in-law are driving from Norwich to help me celebrate.



We are being noticed

Over the last two or three years, the 'civic authorities' have looked to us for community events, as we are a prominent building – not without its problems as we know – which can accommodate a large number of people.

I was asked whether the church could be used for an engagement event for Pride in Place, which is a £5bn scheme to provide up to £20m for Pride in Place areas which



include the most deprived postcodes. The Clayton Vale Pride in Place Area includes pockets from our Electoral Ward, Miles Platting and Newton Heath, and our neighbouring Ward, Clayton and Openshaw. We are sharing this event with All Saints Youth and Community Centre, already a great resource, in need of some TLC, and which is undergoing a transformation in its governance, on which I am leading.

It is also my honour and privilege to have been elected to chair the Board for Clayton Vale Pride in Place. I am having to look very closely at my diary, at where I believe I provide most value. Sadly, I think, some things will have to go!

Do come on the 11th. It's free and will be great fun.

With all good wishes and every blessing

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Aspin'.

1st July, 2026

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