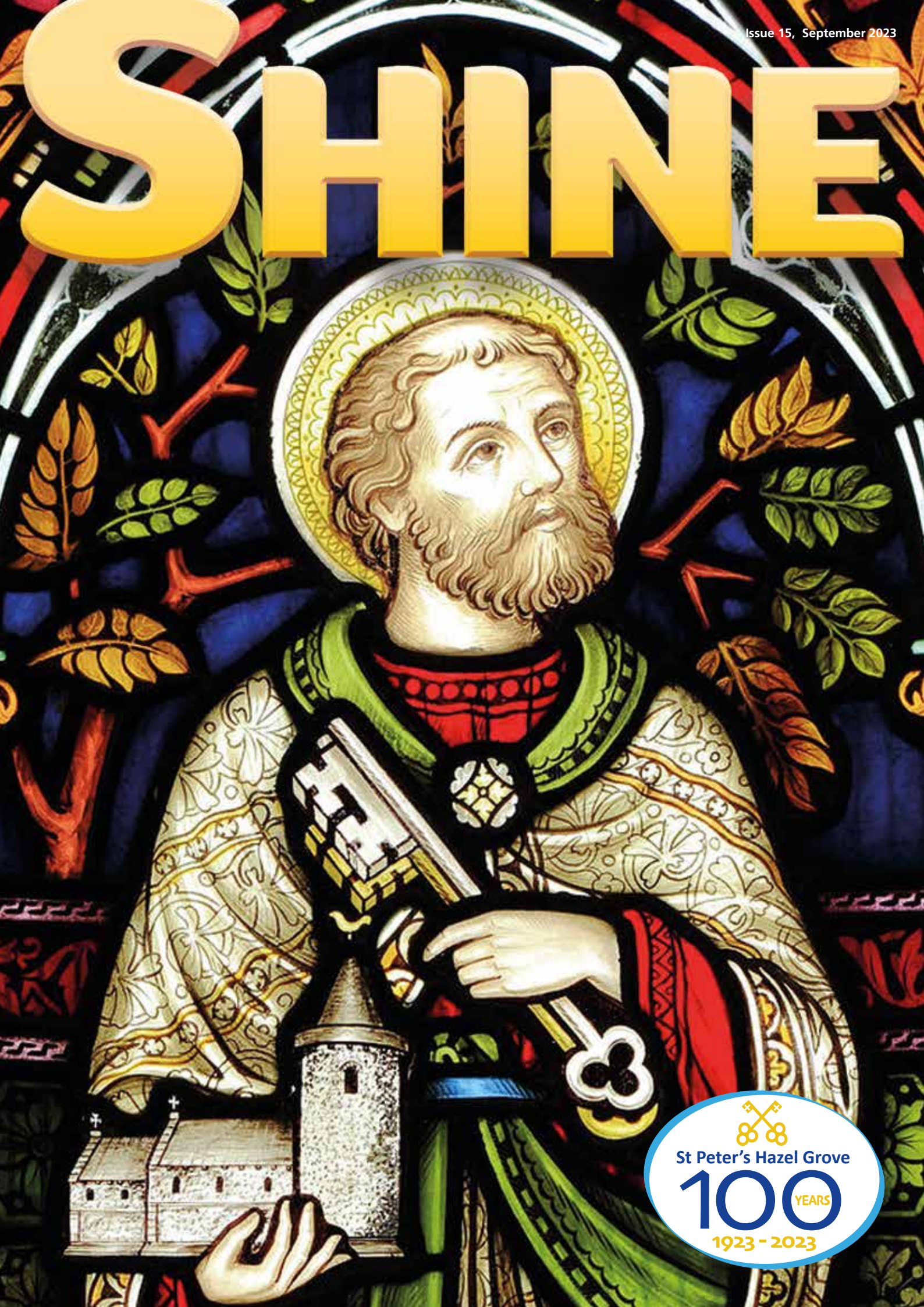


# SHINE





# Calendar of some parish events

We have quite a number of events to look forward to in the coming months, especially as we're celebrating our parish centenary at St Peter's. Here are some dates for you to make a note of in your diary. There'll be fuller details of these and other events in our weekly parish newsletter and in the next issue of Shine.

## 6 September to 19 October:

Marriage Course on Wednesday or Thursday evenings in the parish centre

## Saturday 23 September:

Life in the Spirit seminar in the parish centre – adult and children's sessions

## Friday 29 September:

Understanding autism and disability (Fr Pat Munroe will be attending) at 7.15pm in the Meeting Room

## Thursday 12 October:

Footsteps with Fr Eamonn Mulcahy at 7.30pm in the parish centre

## Saturday 14 October:

Healing Mass at 12 noon

## Saturday 21 October:

Morning of recollection for all current or aspiring Eucharistic ministers, 9-11am in the parish centre

## Thursday 16 November:

St Peter's Helpers Cuppa and Chat from 2 til 3.30pm in the parish centre

## Thursday 16 November:

Gin tasting evening to launch our parish Centenary Gin and presentation by Stockport Gin at 8pm in the parish centre

## Saturday 2 December:

Advent Retreat Day 9.30am to 4pm in the parish centre (incl Mass at 12 noon in church)

## Sunday 10 December:

Youth evening called 'Explore Advent' in the parish centre

## Tuesday 12 December:

St Peter's Helpers Christmas Party in the parish centre

## Friday 15 December:

Parish Christmas Concert at 7.30pm in the parish centre

## Sunday 17 December:

Carol Service at 2.30pm in church

## And a few key dates for 2024 – more to follow in due course

## Saturday 3 February:

Celebration of Marriage and Family Life service at 2pm in church

## Friday 1 March:

A special Inset day for our schools led by the highly inspiring and motivational David Wells

## Saturday 2 March:

David Wells leads a day for the parish, starting in the parish centre

## Friday 15 to Saturday 16 March:

24-hour Adoration – '24 hours for the Lord'

## Sometime in the Spring:

A week of guided prayer

## Saturday 29 June: 12 noon

Celebration Centenary Mass and garden party



## FROM THE PARISH PRIEST

Welcome to our latest issue of Shine. I'm sure you'll find lots of interesting reading about the various activities of our parishes and our parishioners.

During the coming months we will be celebrating the centenary of the foundation of our parish of St Peter's. Our roots go back to 1897 when the first Catholic chapel – formerly a Mount Zion chapel – on Commercial Road was opened and served by priests from St Philip and James church, later re-named Our Lady and the Apostles on Shaw Heath. It was in 1923/4 that the first resident priest was appointed in Hazel Grove and from those beginnings we now have the parish that we are proud to be part of.

Centenary celebrations give us the opportunity to look back in thanksgiving at what has been achieved and to look forward to how we can make more progress in building up the kingdom of God in our time and place so that succeeding generations will have something to inherit.

A number of projects are in hand to celebrate the past and look forward to the future. For now, you'll find a calendar of events opposite but there'll be others added as we progress through our celebrations. I know you'll give them every support over the coming twelve months. In the meantime, happy reading!

Fr Peter

News from the parish communities of  
St Peter's, Hazel Grove and  
St Philip's, Offerton.

## Contents

### 4-5

Gerry's poem  
Missio red boxes update  
Pope Francis' blessing  
Farewells and welcomes

### 6-7

Our new Understanding  
Autism group



### 8-9

Come and See event  
in March

### 10-11

Mothers who are saints

### 12

Writing a new hymn



### 13

TOAST update

### 14-17

Parish pilgrimage to  
Walsingham

### 18-19

Footsteps in 2023



### 20-23

Chester Mystery plays

### 24-25

A former parishioner  
writes from Australia

### 26-27

Mary's Corner



### 28-29

Book Club review

### 30

St Peter's Helpers

### 31

Who's who in St Peter's

## Where we are . . .

### St Peter's Church and presbytery

16 Green Lane, Hazel Grove,  
Stockport SK7 4EA  
Tel 0161 483 3476

### St Philip's Church

Half Moon Lane, Offerton,  
Stockport SK2 5LB

Email: [admin@stpetershazeltrove.org.uk](mailto:admin@stpetershazeltrove.org.uk)

Fr Peter: [petersharrocks@stpetershazeltrove.org.uk](mailto:petersharrocks@stpetershazeltrove.org.uk)

Our joint website is [www.stpeterscatholic.church](http://www.stpeterscatholic.church)



# Shining a light on our parish communities

## Ukraine 500 days

**Gerry Clarke** shares this poem which he wrote in the summer of 2023.

*"The Lord will not let the righteous to be shaken." Psalm 55: 22*

Another starting point since February 24, 2022

500 days on since the invasion of Ukraine:

Non-stop waves of shells and drone attacks:

Landscape pockmarked as if by a virus

City flats sightless windows blown out,

No children on their play swings,

Front line ghost-like villages, emptying.

Wild flowers beneath heaps of rubble,

None for rows of military graves.

In claustrophobic square of Kyiv  
Wounded souls of a gathered crowd:

A lone khaki clad figure,

Feet planted apart, face uplifted,

Unblinking eyes wet but no tears,

One hand on a plain coffin with

a folded flag showing blue and yellow,

A lone president in sudden bereavement,

Cruelly, of a valued dead friend.

In the president's other hand, held aloft  
Symbol in full display of the nation's sunflowers

Some audience eyes soon filling up,  
An onlooking world too, drawn into sympathy:

Not to forget its hesitating promises

For spirit of Ukraine against all-out war;

As the lingering dispersal began,

The continuing stutter of guns,

Hastening darkness and whine of the next alarm.

## Missio red boxes

This year Missio at head office acknowledged the dedication of St Peter's promoters in collecting over £8,000 during 2022. The missionaries are truly grateful for our support as it enables them to bring the Gospel to places we cannot reach ourselves, thus helping us to fulfil our duty to spread the good news. Without the generosity of the box holders and the commitment of the collectors, that total would not have been achieved.

See how generous with their time they are:

- completing 40 years' service are Eamonn, Nora, John and Ann, with Kath close behind
- with over 30 years' service are Fiona, Kay, Helen and Rosemary
- reaching the 20 year milestone are Rosemary, Tony and Tess while Sandra, Rita, Sylvia, Anne, Rita and Hilary have exceeded ten.
- Lilian is our new recruit.

The retirees due to health are Celia, Sheila and David. Nor should we forget those who now have their reward with the Lord: Margaret, Kath, Jenny, Peter and Ann. May they rest in peace.

Should you wish to contribute to Missio, you can contact Fiona or Margaret via their phone numbers listed on page 31.

**missio**  
Today. Tomorrow. Together.



*How special!*

## Pope Francis blesses our daughters

*Sini and Juby share their joy.*

We made our first pilgrimage to Rome, the eternal city and it was such a blessing to visit the tombs of the Saints Peter and Paul and the other papal basilicas. As our second daughter is called Agnes, we also made a visit to the tomb of St Agnes and the church in Piazza Navona which is dedicated to her. We had the chance to participate in holy Mass at the Venerable English College, the seminary for the training of priests for England and Wales. 44 students from this college were martyred during the Reformation in England.

The highlight of our pilgrimage was certainly meeting the Holy Father, Pope Francis up close and in person! We woke up quite early, queued at the Paul VI Audience Hall and were able to secure seats near to the centre aisle. Before the Pope passed by, he stopped to bless Gabrielle and Agnes. Those moments were incredible and we'll never forget them.

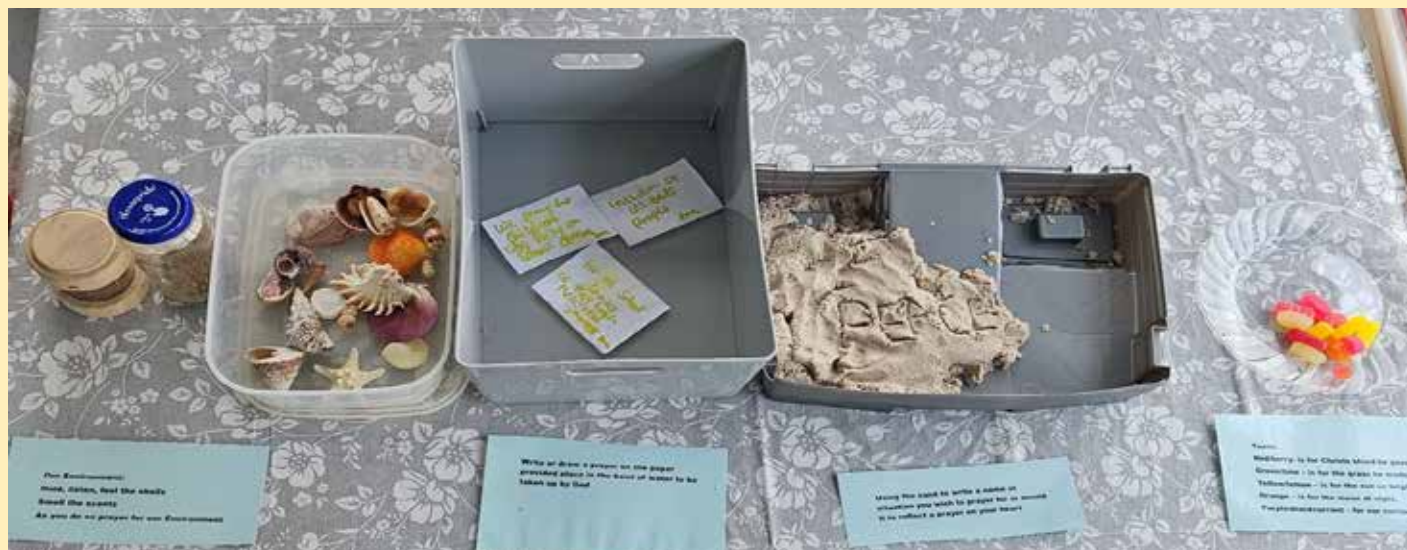
## Farewells and welcomes

Since our last issue, the following people known in our community have gone to their rest:

John Riddiough  
Claire Briggs  
Alessandro Di Chiara  
Norma Taylor  
Win Hayes  
Neil Hitchings Davies  
Sean Donelon  
Ann Irene Walker  
Margaret Frances Gresty  
Joyce Beryl Worne  
Joan Bloomfield  
Peter John Hinde  
Christine Haines  
Mary Hanley  
Wilhelmine Mitchell  
Kathleen Diane Kipling  
Leonard McDonough  
David Peter Davies  
Mary Josephine Burke  
Philomena Rooney  
Terence Turner  
Elizabeth (Liz) Donaghy  
Dolores Politi  
Ken Savage (St Philip's)  
Maureen Stone  
Raymond Wilson Feeley  
Anthony (Tony) Millington  
Theresa Clowes  
John Joseph Waring  
Nora Dennehey  
Joan Foy  
Denis Foudy  
Marie Walker  
Mark Rigg  
Paul Martin  
John Burke

... and we have welcomed 45 people into the church through baptism.





Some of the different forms of sensory prayer

Sometimes the smallest seed can grow to do big things! At our recent Come and See event in March (see pages 8 and 9) Margaret Mercer and I spoke about the excellent Chris Packham BBC programme, 'Inside Our Autistic Minds.' It seems quite a few people in the parish have lives that are touched in some way by autism.

This conversation led to the first meeting of the Understanding Autism Group later in March. There was a shared understanding that, as a parish community, we could learn and do more to include fully in our church community children and adults with autism.

Please understand, if you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism. Before I had my daughter, Annie, I believed children with autism were very quiet and just sat in a corner! I had a lot to learn. Children and adults diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are all unique, with their own set of strengths, challenges and experiences just like everyone else.

# How much understand autism?

Autism is usually associated with social and communication difficulties. Some people experience sensory sensitivities and challenges with paying attention. Processing information can be hard, especially in busy places. At times this can be overwhelming.

Autism can be a 'hidden disability' in that, just by looking at someone you wouldn't know they had it. Some people with autism can 'mask' their condition, trying to fit in, but this takes a lot of energy.

## Sharing our common experiences

At our first meeting of the Understanding Autism Group, a common experience we all had was how changes in the environment, often small, along with raising awareness, can make a huge difference. With that in mind, the aim of the group is to help our parish grow into an autism-friendly community.

The Understanding Autism Group has met four times to date. We've had three presentations which led to many ideas on becoming more inclusive. It's very important that we listen to the voices of those with autism and their families.

The first presentation was delivered by my 23 year-old daughter Annie, who was diagnosed with autism aged three. She describes what it was like for her growing up. It's a heartfelt, honest and inspiring talk that is available to listen to on this link: <https://youtu.be/YbETDnS28IU>.



Understanding autism group in action!



Isaac has done a fantastic job presenting in a video introducing St Peter's church for newcomers. It will be available to watch on the home page of our website: [www.stpeterscatholic.church](http://www.stpeterscatholic.church).



Annie who gave a presentation to the group about growing up with autism

# do we Anna Magner shares her involvement and experience of autism as a vital new group is formed in the parish.

## Sensory prayer

At another meeting Sam Bowden presented personal insights of her own and her children's experience of autism, especially in church and school. She introduced us to sensory prayer, such as blowing a bubble for a short prayer; drawing a prayer in sand or eating different coloured sweets to represent a prayer for different things. We all liked the sweetie one! Sam will be using sensory prayer with families at TOAST on 15 October.

On another occasion Sam shared picture icons for church and Mass. Some children with autism prefer visual information, removing the need for speech which can overload them in a busy place, such as church. Visual cues are helpful in following the Mass. Advance information on changes to the church schedule is also beneficial, for example, at Christmas.

Emma Hopton and her Mum, Maura explained the ASD Pathway in Stockport where there is a four-year wait for diagnosis. They also spoke of their own experience in church with Emma's young son, Isaac, who loves our children's TOAST group on a Sunday. Emma and Maura have made a sensory toy box which is now available in church.

We will continue to provide updates in the parish newsletter and Shine. The group also acts as an informal support and information network. The meetings bring a range of



Sensory toy box contents

parishioners, each with their own insight: people with autism, parents, grandparents, educators and special needs assistants.

We are also aware of others' disabilities. We think some of the ideas coming from the Understanding Autism Group will benefit others with a disability or older people with dementia. But we are only at the start of our journey so expect to hear more from us!

If you have or someone you know has autism, and already come or would like to come to St Peter's or St Philip's, please complete this form using this link: <https://forms.gle/YJCa2mmgYdv5pVGA>. This will enable us to understand and plan for individual needs.

If you would like to join our Understanding Autism Group, please contact Maura Beesley on [mkbeesley@aol.com](mailto:mkbeesley@aol.com).





A packed parish centre



Clare hardly paused for breath!

# Come and See

We had a really marvellous morning in the parish centre on Sunday 5 March at our Come and See event.

This was an opportunity for everyone to find out about the many groups and activities that go on in our two parishes. Clare Allen



The children's choir was in full voice



Arts and crafts



Lots of goodies from the Polish community

did an absolutely sterling job in organising and planning the whole thing, co-opting and encouraging various people to get involved in the different stages, including on the day itself. We welcomed people from our two parishes and beyond, as well as neighbours near the church.

And there was a really helpful 'Your Church' table where people could sign up on prepared sheets if they were interested in becoming welcomers, collection stewards, readers or joining the PPT (Parish Pastoral Team). This was the table to go to for safeguarding information or with any general questions – and for First Aid queries (there weren't any of those, thankfully!).

There was a range of fun and creative activities for both children and adults – they were very popular.

The uniform groups (Scout, Cubs and Brownies) were providing sausage butties from the Scout Hut and organising activities throughout the event. There were drinks and cakes provided in the kitchen. We were treated to a range of live music and all in all, there was a real feeling of community.

Even in the planning stages where people from the various groups met to discuss ideas, there were some lovely opportunities identified for sharing skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Thank you to everyone who helped, plus to everyone who signed up to come along to something new, or volunteered to help a group. Any excess funds raised from refreshments went towards Lenten Lunches and St Philip's Foodbank.

Over 30 groups and activities were represented, in fact there were more groups than we had tables or space for, so they doubled (or trebled) up! Here's who was there:

- Alpha, Sycamore, Charis
- Altar Linen, Piety staff, Cleaners, Missio
- Altar Servers (who had space at the side for trying on albs)
- Bereavement Group
- Card sales for charitable causes
- Flower arranging and activity
- LAMBS Additional Needs Group
- Little Fishes
- Mothers' prayers, Marriage course
- Music groups and choirs
- Polish Catholic Group Community
- Rosary, Praise and Worship, Prayer Warriors
- Scouts, Cubs, Brownies
- Scripture Group, Centering Prayer, Footsteps
- SPY/Confirmation group
- St Peter's Helpers, all other activities
- St Peter's Helpers, card making activity
- St Peter's Helpers: Refugees
- St Philip's Friendship Group
- TOAST
- Walking Group, Theatre Group
- Walsingham Pilgrimage (see pages 14-17 - it happened!)

"Fantastic atmosphere"

"Great opportunity to meet newcomers to the parish"

"Lots of new members and interest in upcoming events"

"People got to know our team"

"Families could explore what the parish has to offer"

"Great representation including from our Polish community and St Philip's"

"I hadn't realised just how much is going on"

"We're looking forward to welcoming new members to our group"

"What a memorable experience"

"I wish our parish had even just half of what you have!"



Friends from  
St Philip's



When we meet for Mothers' prayers each fortnight one of us will share a small reflection on something within our faith, perhaps from scripture or from an uplifting experience we have encountered. One week a member of the group talked about the women in scripture who captured her interest and it was most engaging and informative. This got me to thinking when it was my turn, (it is an entirely optional choice!) about those married women in more recent times who were mothers and who still managed also to become saints. I think this raises them from being ordinary people to becoming icons and great sources of support for harassed mothers rearing their children in today's complex and difficult society.

If you do a bit of internet research on mothers who are saints, you will be astounded at the amazing number of holy and inspiring women who have trodden the path before us and about whom we know little or nothing. Here are brief accounts of just three such saints picked out at random to give a flavour of how motherhood impacted on sainthood or is it how sainthood impacted on motherhood?



### St Frances of Rome

St Frances of Rome, a complete unknown until Wikipedia gave up some of her history. Born in the 14th century her parents married her off at 13. Frances became a mother of six, only one of whom, a son Baptista, survived into adulthood. Unfortunately, he married a woman who took a vitriolic dislike to Frances so much so that she insulted, belittled and cut her out of her only

***Mothers' Prayers** is a worldwide group that began in England in 1995. It provides an opportunity for mothers to meet together and pray for their children and grandchildren and, by doing so, to give and receive support. The meetings are held fortnightly at the home of Teresa Thiele and attendance varies from week to week depending on other commitments etc. Here's a recent reflection from one of the group.*

## Mothers who are saints



son's life. Frances, unlike most of us, didn't return like for like. On the contrary she never stopped trying to bridge the chasm her daughter-in-law had created between them. She never gave up her efforts but continued to be kind, gentle, patient towards the younger woman until she wore down her opposition, eventually changing her attitude and bringing peace to the family. Frances of Rome is an ideal saint to appeal to for the healing of a fractured family and a support for Mums working to keep a family united. Once Frances' husband died, she founded an order of nuns and spent the rest of her life caring for the poor and the sick.

### St Monica

Most of us have heard of St Monica of course but will know little beyond the fact she was the mother of St Augustine. Monica was believed to be a Berber from North Africa. She was married early in life to a man with a wicked temper and few morals. His persistent adultery was the cause of much suffering to her, as was his opposition to her faith.

Monica was a dedicated Christian even though no one else in her family was, and her husband totally refused to allow any of their children to be baptised apart from Augustine when he was extremely ill. However,

as soon as Augustine showed signs of recovery, permission was withdrawn.

Augustine grew up displaying many of his father's weaknesses and Monica dedicated her life and prayer towards his reformation. Such was her dedication that she followed her grown son to Rome where he had gone secretly. When she arrived, he had already left for Milan, so she followed him again. Can you imagine the public outcry if we did that to our children today? In Milan Monica met Bishop (later Saint) Ambrose who was her great support. For years, she quietly prayed for her wayward son and never gave up, not even when he took a mistress or joined a different religion. It was 17 years before Monica saw her son, Augustine, converted to Christianity and become one of the most influential saints of all time. All of this because of the unceasing prayers of one mother.

This should encourage us not to lose heart with our own straying children but to keep on praying for them! The two of them had six peaceful months together before Augustine was baptised by Bishop Ambrose

and then they set off to return home together. But it was not to be. Monica died at the port of Ostia, a little distance from Rome and never made it to Africa.

### St Zelig

You might recognise this name not because of Zelig herself but because she was the mother of the saint we know as the Little Flower, St Theresa. Before they met, both Zelig and her husband Louis entered religious life, but both had to give it up, Zelig because of her poor health and Louis because he did not have the Latin required for a monk's life. When they married, they agreed to remain celibate and have no children, but their confessor persuaded them this was not God's plan for them. They went on to have nine children, four of whom died in childhood. At first glance it would appear Zelig was an absolutely ordinary mother.

She was a housewife and seamstress in an ordinary family with a lovingly but seemingly uneventful marriage. Closer scrutiny, however, shows her to be a woman way ahead of her time and quite extraordinary. At the same

time as running a large household, she was an amazingly successful businesswoman, running her own lace-making business. It was so successful that her husband gave up his own watch and jewellery work to take over its finances. Many businesswomen struggling daily to balance work with family life could and do find Zelig an inspiration and role model. At home Zelig and Louis created a prayerful, loving environment for their family.

Zelig herself wrote:

"When we had our children, our ideas changed somewhat. We lived only for them. They were all our happiness and we never found any except in them. In short, nothing was too difficult and the world was no longer a burden for us. For me, our children were a great compensation, so I wanted to have a lot of them in order to raise them for heaven."

The loving holiness of Zelig and Louis and their vocation of parenting resulted in all five surviving daughters entering religious life. Zelig herself died at the age of 46 of breast cancer when the youngest child Theresa was only four years old. She, of course, was later declared a saint – perhaps the most beloved saint of our time. Another sister, Leonie, has been put forward for canonisation and in 2015 Zelig and Louis became the first married couple in the whole of the Church's history to be canonised as saints by Pope Francis.



### A prayer for mothers

God our Father, motherhood was never easy. Not for Mary, not for us. There's a longing in it, waiting, pain, hard work and often tight budgets. But you, Creator God, walk our path, lighting with glory the bond of trust and humble devotion. Speak to us, God, as mothers of our children, that we and our children may know your presence in our lives and feel your love and guidance each and every day.



It was during a meeting of the PPT (Parish Pastoral Team) that ideas were being discussed for ways to mark the centenary of our parish and Fr Peter suggested it would be good to have a new hymn. That started the cogs turning in my head in the ensuing days. Before I knew it, I was quietly reaching for manuscript paper to jot down some ideas.

After a few hesitant starts, the concept gained momentum and I had a melody sorted in my head. But what about the words...? As I sat at my desk, I happened to open my PPT file and the little prayer card slipped out right before my eyes. It was the prayer for our parish that we say at the end of every PPT meeting. Before lockdown the words had been inserted at the front of our hymn books but of course, we don't use the books too much nowadays because of the great TV screens in church. The prayer is currently shown on the screens before every weekend Mass.

# Writing a new hymn

It seemed obvious that I should utilise the sentiments of the lovely prayer. And so I did. Then I added a final verse to personalise the hymn for our parish centenary. My objective was to give something different to help unify our faith community during this special landmark celebration.

So much for pen and paper for fleshing out the melody, other harmonies and accompaniment for organ, guitar, trumpet, violin, flute, beat box – all the instruments we enjoy hearing in the parish! By now I was really going for it, mentally at least, but I knew I needed more specialised help.

I contacted our organist, Chris Ellis for advice and he immediately took up the challenge. I downloaded some music-writing software and set about learning how to use it. In the meantime, Chris applied his professional expertise and lo and behold it was time for us to meet up in church to run through the music and the words.

A tweak here and a tweak there and the centenary hymn came alive. I recall

## We ask your help

**We ask your help, Saint Peter as we follow Jesus' way.  
Inspire us with your vibrant, gen'rous faith today.  
Amen, amen, Saint Peter guide and friend,  
Amen, amen, amen.**

**Encourage and enrich us in sincere humility;  
Help us to work like you in mutual charity.  
Amen, amen, Saint Peter guide and friend,  
Amen, amen, amen.**

**Saint Peter, pray for us to grow in service, faith and love  
With hope and courage just like yours in God above.  
Amen, amen, Saint Peter guide and friend,  
Amen, amen, amen.**

**Here in this church we've giv'n to God a hundred years of praise.  
With grateful thanks in prayer today our heart and voice we raise.  
Amen, amen, Saint Peter guide and friend,  
Amen, amen, amen.**

*Having risen to the challenge, Anne-Marie Bailey gives the background to composing a new hymn to mark our parish centenary.*



going home punching the air with excitement. I found myself musing on the life of a composer, ha ha – you know, like Elgar, Sibelius, Grieg!! You see, I'd been to all their homes over the years and seen where they had composed some of their greatest works! I was feeling a certain empathy with their lives – and then reality dawned and it was time to make some dinner..!

Chris and I agreed the final settings. Job done. Eileen Rigg rehearsed the four-part version with the adult choir and Chris let rip on the organ (with more air punching from me!).

Before the Mass on the evening of 29 June, the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, I shared the music with some

parishioners I knew could sightread and/or sing, so that there would be voices other than mine in the congregation that night.

The Mass itself was a wonderful occasion as we launched our centenary year. If you didn't make it, why not watch the recording of it on our website. Go to the Webcam page: [www.churchservices.tv/stockport](http://www.churchservices.tv/stockport) and scroll down to the Recordings. You'll find it listed as 'Feast of St Peter and St Paul and Opening of our Centenary Year 29.06.23'.

It was a joy to hear the hymn come alive – and an even greater joy to hear people humming it afterwards! Hopefully during the centenary year you'll get to hear it, sing it and enjoy it.

Readers of Shine will be familiar with the TOAST journey so far. Articles and features have been written about it for three years now describing the content of the TOAST meetings and explaining just what it's all about. We have read about how the children and their families have brought the weekly Gospel readings to life and the impact that has had on their daily family life. We have also heard from parents about how important coming to St Peter's on a Sunday is for their children. (See Issue 13 of Shine in particular for the background to TOAST.) This group has brought another dimension to the vibrancy of our community.

And yet, if you were to go to TOAST on any given Sunday, you might not recognise it at all from what you have read. The speed at which things have changed has kept everyone on their toes and has had the effect of keeping the gathering feeling fresh and new from one term to the next. And this new academic year is no exception.

One of the biggest changes this year is that we are saying au revoir to our friend, Kieran the puppet! Kieran has been with us since the beginning and has visited most families in their homes. He has been a really useful way of proclaiming the Gospel each week and raising some interesting questions about what each passage might mean. We have had a lot of fun seeing the various videos that people have made with Kieran and their children and his antics have made us laugh most weeks. It is also true to say that he has brought some very poignant 'ah' moments that have made even the toughest of us shed a tear. In place of the videos for this year will be a live and interactive telling of the Gospel which will include more of the children each week.



*Our thriving and popular children's liturgy programme, called TOAST – Time On A Sunday Together – is also dynamic. Read here about how it's developing and the changes that are planned for this academic year. It starts again on Sunday 24 September.*



Kieran is off on a world tour!

We will bring with us hymns and songs of worship that the children enjoy singing and, of course, some of the reflections and prayers that we use in the parish centre each week.

And the third big change is that we are going to set up the hall differently so that we are 'in the round.' We hope that this will help everyone, young and old, to feel even more actively involved in everything that is going on during TOAST. Also we hope this will make it feel more like a conversation about the Scriptures and create a gentle atmosphere which will make it easier for all participants to pray and share their thoughts.

As well as these big changes, there will also be new music and, hopefully, one or two extra new features as the year progresses.

Thank you, Lord, for all the graces that you have poured out on TOAST and its participants. We pray you continue to bless it during this new school year. Amen.

The second big change this coming year is that we are looking forward to joining the rest of the congregation in church during Mass once a month.







# Walsingham — a parish pilgrimage

Auspiciously our group left Hazel Grove on Monday 1 May, a month traditionally devoted to Mary, to travel to the national shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk – a first for St Peter's parish. We had a gentle five-hour coach journey via Newark where we had a generous break that enabled the group to eat and socialise. Our journey ended via a very flat, albeit attractive Norfolk and the medieval village of Walsingham.

The shrine here was founded in 1061 in an abbey, then after the dissolution was restored in the Slipper Chapel in 1934. Already there was keen anticipation among the group for the next few pilgrimage days. A perfect start!

A bright Tuesday morning saw us enjoying prayer and reflection in the lovely Slipper Chapel with its minimalist décor and an altar backdrop of a narrow, tall, stained glass window. Numerous services were to follow that day, which contributed to the developing prayerful atmosphere in the group.

We assembled at the edge of the

**Gerry Clarke** documents his time in this Norfolk pilgrimage destination with 32 other parishioners in early May 2023.

village for our first highlight – a rosary procession to the national shrine, known as the Holy Mile. It looked inviting with its ever-narrow footpath whose grassy sides were full of wild flowers, winding before us through the level Norfolk

countryside. No sound of traffic, just silence and birdsong as our group got ready for the procession. Volunteers were organised to carry the shoulder-high frame bearing the beautiful statue of Our Lady of Walsingham, a cross bearer at the head and an



ever-ready Fr Peter with rosary beads in hand initiated the gradually unwinding procession.

We gathered at the shrine for an outside service and individual visits for prayer and reflection to the small atmospheric Our Lady chapel. We had a gentle walk to return to the village centre either singly or in company via the morning's peaceful path.

**Wednesday** offered more blue skies and highlights. After the regular start to the morning, we enjoyed our second experience of the rosary procession along the Holy Mile to the shrine, but with a significant extra. We saw the grounds of the medieval Walsingham Abbey, its ruins and the original location of the shrine. This was marked by a round plaque with a traditional English cross set in the grass. Our group gathered around this in a reverent, quiet service in near view of what remained of the historic East window of the Abbey. A moving moment. In its shadow, Mass is still celebrated as it was daily in pre-Reformation days in England. Pilgrims of both catholic and non-catholic churches are back at the







site in large numbers. At the end of the morning, Mass was celebrated in the lovely, capacious shrine church with hymns and music for the large pilgrim congregation.

We had a free afternoon. The coach took some to the popular seaside town of Sheringham which included an opportunity to enjoy a steam train journey through beautiful Norfolk countryside – with the added bonus of seeing a turnaround engine! Later in the evening we had the special experience of a candlelit,

silent procession and prayer service in the grounds behind the centre to the outside altar. Time to absorb a beautiful, eventful day.

When and where to spend **Thursday** morning til lunchtime and our journey home? In the library or the comfortable lounges in the centre? In the village, browsing the shops, having a coffee, or looking at the large, long established Anglican garden? A number chose the latter, which offered a great experience: quite a large church with an altar,

stained glass window, many icons and everywhere lit up with numerous burning red lamps. To one side, a hushed prayer group was in session. Outside we saw the Stations of the Cross and the Beatitudes artistically set in the surrounding wall. This ecumenical experience resonated so well with us, not least in the present time of prayer prominence for Christian unity.

In due course, a relaxed, happy group headed home. For me, this was a parish group experience

so well organised – and so well led by the excellent team of Fr Peter and Deacon John. Particular thanks go to guitarists Brendan Morrison and Steph Leyden, roving photographer Mike Higginbottom capturing different dimensions of the pilgrimage, and of course to the many mutually helpful pilgrims. For me, a personal note of appreciation must go to Peter Henshaw for his thoughtfulness and kindness. This was indeed a memorable, joyous experience that can make changes.







# Footsteps in 2023

**We've enjoyed some wonderful talks at the Footsteps series of presentations this year – and it's not over yet!!**

Footsteps is a programme designed simply to share ideas to help us on our Christian journey and we do it all in a relaxed, friendly, informal way – with a drink and nibbles beside you.

We began in 2018, believe it or not, offering the opportunity to meet with Christians of all denominations to hear and discuss aspects of our faith. We try to ensure that the content of our meetings is stimulating, thought provoking and with a good sprinkling of humour. Our speakers are selected with this in mind – and it's fair to say, they never disappoint! Everything is informal, relaxed and, with sometimes over a hundred people coming, there is a great buzz about the place.

We transform the parish centre to a café-style setting with small tables, complete with a tablecloth, candles, flowers, food and drink. When we run out of small tables, we set up more chairs and people sit at the larger round tables too.

## Local, plus

When we first started, we were happy to involve all the local churches: Methodist, C of E, Baptist, URC, Catholic – you name it, everyone is welcome. Over the years it would seem that we regularly exceed the description of 'local' and we usually welcome people from as far afield as New Mills, Glossop, Romiley, Marple, Poynton, Heald Green, Altrincham,

Bolton, Oldham etc. Nothing gives us greater pleasure than opening our doors and being able to provide the opportunity in our large parish centre to have these evening events.

We started in early February with our own Mary Hardiman asking 'Where is God in my life?' She gave us a lot to think and pray about in her own delightful way.



**Anthony Delaney**



**Canon John Rafferty came on the 53rd anniversary of his ordination so we celebrated with cake all round**

Mid March saw Anthony Delaney from the Ivy Church in Didsbury come back again. He had so much to offer when thinking about how we can make a difference to others in our lives. He titled his talk 'From lost and alone to found and at home' and it really resonated with people.

Then in late April we welcomed the return visit of Fr Chris Thomas from Liverpool, who had everyone captivated with his thoughts on "The Bible – word of God or word of man?" We were in the church that night as the parish centre was being

Church in today's society. He focussed on the Christian Church in its broadest sense, not the Catholic church, and of course, gave us much to ponder and chat about. Fr John came on the 53rd anniversary of his ordination, so we celebrated with cake all round.

At the time of going to print, we're excited to welcome Dr Sr Helen Costigane who is coming from London to share her thoughts on what might prevent us experiencing God's love and mercy. She was the highly inspirational speaker at Loreto's Speech Night in the



**Fr Eamonn Mulcahy**

Bridgewater Hall last year and she went down a storm. It was parents who'd been there who suggested we try and get her to Footsteps. Investigations uncovered that she was a friend of our very own Fr Ned, so yes, she agreed to come! And he's coming with her.

We're also looking forward to hearing Fr Eamonn Mulcahy come back to us on Thursday 12 October from Ardwick – and around the world. He travels extensively but has always been happy to come to Footsteps and wow us with his great insight and humour.



**Dr Sr Helen Costigane**

refurbished. We encouraged people to bring their own drinks but, in true Footsteps fashion, we provided the nibbles!

Fr Chris had suggested our next speaker, Pauline McDougall who came from Southport in early June to give us her well considered thoughts on the Beatitudes and how they contain values that could change society both then and now.

The crowds continued to arrive in July for Canon John Rafferty who came to consider what is the place of the

**We now have the facility to record the talks and put them on our parish website at the foot of the Gallery page: <https://stpeterscatholic.church/gallery/>. Many of our regulars like to hear these gems again, or, if they can't get to Footsteps on the night, they can cope better with their disappointment!**

**Plans are afoot for 2024, so watch out for details in our parish newsletter and the next issue of Shine. If you haven't been to Footsteps, maybe you could consider giving it a go – but be warned, you might well get hooked and you'll be back for more. That would be great!**



# CHESTER MYSTERY PLAYS

2013 2018 **2023** 2028 2033



**Julie Williams**  
shares her  
experience with  
another parish  
outing to Chester  
for the magnificent  
Mystery Plays.

## Not so much a Mystery tour...

Five years ago in Issue 5 of Shine (September 2018), I wrote at the end of an article on the Chester Mystery Plays: "Perhaps we can do it again in five years' time" – and we have done! A group of parishioners and friends went by coach from St Peter's on Saturday 8 July to this year's production at Chester Cathedral. For those of us who had been previously, we weren't disappointed to return.

My first experience of this performance at the cathedral, by the Chester community, was with a group from St Peter's in 2008 organised by Tony Martin. We returned again in 2013 when Fr Peter organised a post-performance afternoon tea at his previous parish of St Werburgh's, Chester. Another trip followed in

2018 - again with the allure of an afternoon tea! That time we enjoyed the hospitality at St Columba's parish centre Chester, where our previous parish curate, Fr Jonathan Brandon, had become their parish priest. This year, however, an earlier start necessitated bringing our own refreshments to ensure we were comfortably seated in good time for the three-hour-long spectacular!

### What are the Mystery Plays?

The Mystery Plays, as you may have gathered, are only performed every five years. The plays are Christian Bible accounts and developed during the Middle Ages to bring these stories alive in dramatic form to most of the ordinary folk who were ignorant

of Latin, which at the time was the language of the Church's worship. Initially, it was the monks at the Abbey of St Werburgh who enacted the stories, then, over time, the plays were moved outside and performed on open pageant waggons by individual companies of the Chester tradespeople's Guilds, with each Guild being responsible for a certain play. The plays evolved as a mix of piety, slapstick, wit and topical affairs. However, by 1575 they had become rather too bawdy and the church of the day disapproved sufficiently to ensure that the government forced them to cease. The plays were not seen again until 1951, when they were revived for The Festival of Britain and they have been performed every five years since.



This year's Mystery Plays were directed by John Young. He explains: "I wanted the audience to feel as though they were experiencing these stories for the first time. That they were happening right in front of their eyes, now. Placing them in touching distance of characters and making them feel as though they were not only watching but part of the landscape. Whilst these plays are based on the Bible, I wanted to embrace the community theatre aspect and create a production that feels dramatic and spectacular." By the end of the performance, I think most of the audience would agree that he had certainly achieved his aim!

John Young's staging of the plays in transverse from the transept to the nave, down the centre of the cathedral, was successful in creating an extensive performance area that allowed for a very close up and differing view of the actors for all the audience, as well as a vast area for fast, seamless changing scenes from one play to the next. It also permitted



### Act 1

- 1 Creation And Fall
- 2 Adam And Eve
- 3 Cain And Abel
- 4 Noah's Flood
- 5 The Nativity
- 6 The Shepherds
- 7 Magi And The Innocents

### Act 2

- 8 Temptation
- 9 The Healing: the Blind Man And Lazarus
- 10 Judas
- 11 The Last Supper
- 12 The Trial
- 13 The Crucifixion
- 14 The Harrowing Of Hell
- 15 The Resurrection
- 16 The Ascension
- 17 The Judgement





a huge space for the excellent flowing choreography throughout the scenes; the extensive fight between Cain and Abel being exhausting to watch as the actors covered so much floor space. It also allowed interaction with the audience during some of the more comedic scenes, such as the Shepherdess's adoration of the star and the banter between Noah and his wife as she refused to get onboard the Ark. These scenes provided some hilarious moments and light relief in contrast to the frantic scene of the slaughtering of the innocents with the distraught, wailing mothers, having their babies snatched from their arms, running around bereft with their hands raised aloft and dripping in very realistic 'blood' in a very graphic scene, which caused some debate amongst our group.

The live music, singing and sound effects were very dramatic, resounding through the cathedral. Whilst often very loud, they thoroughly enhanced the action. The stage lighting was impressive, especially as the natural light dimmed through the stained-glass windows on what was a dimly damp afternoon outside. This heightened the lighting effects during the Crucifixion and

Resurrection plays. The plays weren't stereotypical as they depicted a gang of thuggish women stripping and nailing Jesus to the cross in a most violent manner. The many costumes were simply styled but very colourful, fashioned from all kinds of donated and recycled materials. These and indeed all the props, had been made by local community groups, schools, colleges and workshops in Chester. With so many actors, musicians and a vast army of volunteers behind the scenes, it is no wonder that this production is one of the largest community theatre events in Britain.

There was never a dull moment in the whole three hours that the 200 cast members performed and they remained totally focused throughout the plays. Made up mostly of amateur hobbyist thespians, living in and around Chester, plus a cohort of twenty children, the cast was an example of diversity and inclusivity in every way. As the parish group returned to our coach through the pouring rain, we all agreed it had been a great achievement by those involved to present such a fantastic production. Hopefully, we will have another trip to see the Chester Mystery Plays in 2028, afternoon tea venue pending!





# My memories of growing up in St Peter's parish

I intended to write these memories back at the time of the 90th anniversary of the church but somehow it got on the 'to do list', then along came Covid which brought a lot of changes to my life so time was more restricted. It was still there though at the back of my mind. Then I read the December 2022 issue of Shine and really enjoyed the article by Lavinia Maguire. Our lives have taken a similar path: we both grew up in the country, lived in a town or city and we are both ending our days in a different country from which we were born. So thank you, Lavinia for giving me a little push!

I was born in Hazel Grove in 1934, three years after the official opening of St Peter's. This will put me a long way down the list from my late uncle, Clifford Hallworth, whose baptism is the first entry in the parish register. My father, John, was one of his elder brothers who married my mother, Annie Gosling in 1933. He was from a family of nine children, seven of whom attended St Peter's as adults. I had 22 cousins from the Hallworth side of varying ages (I came in the middle). So, we were known in the parish for a long time. I'm sure some of you will remember my late cousin Cecilia Wiseman; we were born only weeks apart. Another cousin, Monica Pickles is still in the parish.

*From Australia Vera Higginbotham (née Hallworth) was inspired by an article in our last issue of Shine to share her story.*

Hazel Grove at this time was very much a village where we knew almost everyone and, researching my family history, I realised we were related to most of them too. We lived on Bosden Hall Road and I went to the council school just a few minutes' walk away. My maternal grandparents, with whom I spent a lot of time, lived in Bosden Fold cottages. There were five cottages which straggled the bottom of Commercial Road with Bosden Fold Road to the right and Bean Leach Road to the left.

Behind them there was a big allotment which went down as far as where Overton Crescent is today. There was no Talbot Street either, where we eventually lived – just lots of fields and countryside for my friends and me to explore. No homework in those days, so a quick change out of our school clothes and off we went.

There were lots of blackberries in season that few knew about so we had many blackberry pies. We would sometimes go to help at Hobson's

farm, raking the hay and helping to put it in stacks or bringing in the cows for milking. I'm not sure how much help we were but we enjoyed it. It was a great place to be, especially as the war was on. We saw little of that although we were always aware of having family in danger.

I had three uncles in the services and my father was at the D-Day landings. We lost sleep because of the air raids and watched the German planes overhead on their way to bomb Manchester. One enemy plane came down at the top of Torkington Road in the fields; the pilot was unharmed. In December 1940 an incendiary bomb landed on the roof of Stepping Hill hospital where my mother and newborn brother were. They got all the mums to lie under their beds during air raids, presumably to protect them from flying glass. We were lucky to be in Hazel Grove.

In early 1941 my father was called up to the army so he asked his mother to take me to Mass as my

own mother was not a Catholic. My grandfather lived on Cook Street and we met each Sunday under the famous store's clock. This was a whole new experience for me. My Dad had taken me to church but hadn't explained much to me except how to behave during Mass; now I had my grandmother and aunts to instruct me. We always sat on the last pew in the middle and occasionally spilled over onto the pew in front - there were lots of us.

I always sat by my grandmother and Auntie Celia and I began to have a knowledge and understanding of the faith, which has stayed with me all my life, thanks mainly to my aunt who was also my godmother so she fulfilled her obligation well.

Then came First Holy Communion, which caused problems for me because I have trouble fasting. I became faint so poor Grandma then spent part of each Mass in the porch where a jug of water, glasses and chairs were kept for those of us with this problem. I still remember the relief I felt when the 12 hour fast was abolished. There was an upside to this: Grandma would not let me walk home down Commercial Road until I'd had breakfast at her house, usually egg and bacon – a treat in wartime!

I received First Holy Communion from Fr Kelly, who was parish priest until I was 12 years old. I was shocked when he said he was leaving; I had assumed he would always be there because I hadn't known that priests were moved around. I don't remember him as a person only as a priest but Fr Quinn who came next I remember very well. I went to Sunday school and he would bob in to chat to us some Sundays. He had a small car, maybe black, which was certainly a novelty to most of us children back then. One week he took us in small groups for a ride around the nearby streets – what a real thrill for us!

Sunday school I also enjoyed going to, unlike a lot of children at school who would complain about it. We must have had better teachers as I never heard anyone complain at St Peter's. The nuns would come from the convent at Great Moor to teach us part of the catechism, then the following week to test us on it before going on to the next part.



*Beech Avenue, off Hazelwood Road, being built in the 1930s*

They explained a lot of points and told us about the places mentioned so it was interesting and not just routine. I don't know how old I was when I stopped going, but I remember being in the Guild of St Agnes and the children of Mary. Of course, we all loved the processions.

Then came my teenage years and work. I worked at a number of different places, mostly factories, as the education I received did not qualify me for other things. With a war on, education wasn't a great priority for the government. After many years of doing this type of work I decided I should try something else. I applied to and was employed by Marks and Spencer where I stayed for five years, working my way from sales floor to the office.

During this time our priest changed to Fr Walsh, followed soon after by Fr Roper as his assistant. The first time I met Fr Walsh he put me to work doing the now long forgotten outdoor collection on Commercial Road and some of the streets off there.

I'm sure many people have had times when they needed someone neutral to talk to about a problem and Fr Walsh arrived just at the right time to help me with one. After that we struck up a friendship that lasted until he died. He was too ill to officiate at my marriage but, when I arrived at the church, he

was standing by the gates waiting to give me his blessing before I went in – a tear-jerking moment. I remember him as a very down to earth, straight talking priest whose sermons reflected this. He never held back from what he called "the plain unvarnished truth." This was also the time when big changes started to happen in the Mass. I'm afraid I cannot remember in which order they all came but I know that Fr Walsh was the first priest to explain them to us at St Peter's.

After my marriage we went to live in Stockport. Although in Our Lady's parish, we were much nearer to St Joseph's so that's where we went to Mass, along with most of our neighbours. By coincidence the parish priest was Fr Quinn along with Fr Joseph Russell, so, former and future priests of St Peter's. Fr Quinn was more in the background. I am sure everyone held him in great esteem at St Peter's.

In 1968 we came to live in Australia and have attended four parishes during the years, all very welcoming to us. The people of course make up the parish but I think the parish priest makes a big difference to how it all works, so St Peter's seems to be in very good hands with Fr Peter.

My cousin Monica has sent me copies of Shine, plus with the webcam and recorded Masses I can see what a thriving parish it is. So, please keep up the good work and God bless.



*View of Bosden Hall Road (off Chapel Street) taken in the 1930s*



*Part of the A6 in Hazel Grove in the early 1960s*





# Mary's corner

Mary Hardiman, speaker and author, invites us to reflect on the Lord's Prayer

## Praying the Lord's Prayer

**The Lord's Prayer or the Our Father is probably the most famous prayer of all, known in many languages and recited across the world. But so often we can say this without really thinking about what the words mean. For me it encompasses everything our hearts could desire because it teaches us how to let God be God, to acknowledge his power and to trust that he alone will fulfil our every need. I find it to be a prayer of surrender, of longing and of freedom.**

And so I would like to take a look again at these words of Jesus and to see how we may be able to make it a little more meaningful. I am going to use the words from Matthew 6:9-13, the words of which are slightly different to the prayer we know.

**Our Father in heaven, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us. And do not put us to the test, but save us from the Evil One.**

### Our Father in heaven

Why does Jesus start with these words?

Immediately Jesus is telling us who and where God is. He is our heavenly father, the perfect parent who lives in a place where everything is as it should be. Before the world was ever created, God was there, breathing life into all things. From the formless, desolate chasm he brought forth light, life and the diverse and abundant wonder of creation. All things were made by him and everything we have is his gift to us. In this simple introduction Jesus acknowledges the supreme authority of God and very cleverly invites us to see both the omnipotence of our creator and someone with whom we can be intimate.

**How do you acknowledge God the Father in your life?**

### May your name be held holy

I once listened to a talk by a Franciscan friar called Richard Rohr and he was speaking about the word Yahweh. In Hebrew the vowels of this word are not mentioned so you get the letters YHWH; this is because historically the name of God is deemed too important even to be fully spelt. The name Yahweh can actually be said without any need for your tongue or mouth to move. That means that you can breathe this word in and out and by so doing breathe in and out the fullness of God. You can say 'Yah' as an in breath and 'weh' as an out breath. Just try it. And so in the first breath we ever take as a baby we speak the name of God; in every breath we take during our lives we are speaking the name of God. And, get this, we never need to worry about our last words because in the last breath we ever take we will be saying the name of God. Is there any greater way than this to sanctify our creator? We don't always think about breathing because

it is the most natural thing in the world to do. But we know that conscious breathing can slow our heart rate and relax us. And so maybe it's a good idea to spend a little time each day focusing on our breath and, in doing so, remind ourselves of the holiness of God.

**How do you keep the name of God holy?**

### Your kingdom come

What does this mean? What is God's kingdom? I believe that God's kingdom is not something reserved for the afterlife. No. God's kingdom is his beautiful dream for you and for me, for here and for now.

For me God's kingdom is a way of being that simply sets us free, not to

do whatever we like but to be the people he created us to be; there is a huge difference as I'm certain you know.

When we pray this prayer are we not asking God to allow that dream to break open in us, right here and right now? Are we not asking God to set us free from all that holds us back, from all that prevents us from living in the liberating love that he offers us as his beloved sons and daughters?

**Do you want this kingdom in your life?**

### Your will be done, on earth as in heaven

Writer and broadcaster Malcolm Muggeridge once said that the only prayer we need ever say is 'your will be done'. The emphasis here is on the word 'your'. It's strange because most of the time we don't always want that, do we? We'd rather have our own will done.

But you know this line is the most beautiful prayer of surrender. Because are we not asking God for the grace to allow his holy plan to grow and manifest in our lives, no matter what that might look like? It is a huge risk; I'm sure we know this from personal experience. However, we also know that no matter what, God never leaves us and that there is meaning and purpose in all things.

By praying this short line, can we allow ourselves to simply fall into grace, trusting that God knows best and that he will never leave us, no matter how hard things may seem?

**How has God's will played out in your life?**



### Give us today our daily bread

When we ask for our daily bread I think there are two aspects to this. Jesus was always very aware of our physical needs; we see this in the miracle of the loaves and fishes as well as at the wedding feast in Cana. So many of our brothers and sisters face huge challenges when it comes to feeding themselves and their families. How aware are we of this?

I love this line too, because here we recognise that the future is not ours to plan. All we have is here and now and all we need is what God chooses to give us here and now.

And so our daily bread is also our spiritual nourishment, manifest in word and sacrament; it is the very presence of God in our lives, upholding, sustaining, comforting, challenging, defending, encouraging, embracing and loving us through good and not so good times.

**What daily bread would you like to ask God for?**

### And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us

What a bold prayer – that we dare to ask God to imitate what we do! It's a massive challenge for sure. In her book 'The Choice', writer and psychologist Edith Eger says this about forgiveness:

'To forgive is to give up the need for a different past.'

In other words, if we forgive then there is no room to dwell on how we wish things had been. Nobody can deny that forgiveness is such a difficult thing to do, especially when we feel hurt or wounded. As I said at the start, the Lord's Prayer is a prayer of surrender. In this beautiful line, we hand over to God all that has hurt and wounded us.

We cannot pardon or absolve another without his amazing grace. And so this line is also about freedom; it's about letting God be God and allowing his grace, his kindness and his compassion to work in and through us and to flow out to a world that hungers and thirsts for mercy and redemption.

**Is there something in your life of which you need to let go? Can you bring that to God in prayer and ask him to give you whatever you need to do that?**

### And do not put us to the test

There is a new translation of this which some churches across the world have adapted. It says, 'do not let us fall into temptation.' Whichever way you look at it, I suppose what it's asking God is to keep us close to him, not to give up but to trust him even when things get hard.

There are so many challenges and distractions in our world that keep us apart from God. What we are really praying here is that God stays at our side and strengthens us in the daily battles. We may not recognise that the temptations are the work of the Evil One but anything that distances us from God is not of God. We all need the Lord's help to stay close to him, to recognise and resist the temptations so that we can really live God's kingdom on this earth as well as in the life beyond.

**Do you feel tested at the moment or has there been a time when you did? What would you like to say to God about that right now?**

### But save us from the Evil One

When I counselled teenagers, many of them used to tell me that they didn't feel good enough, pretty enough, popular enough or clever enough. They felt lost, useless, excluded and rejected – sometimes by their own families. I believe that the Bad Spirit's greatest delight is in telling us that we are losers, failures or misfits, that we are somehow inadequate and worthless. It is simply not true. Each of us is a beloved child of God; in him we own our highest identity. There is nothing more important than this. It matters not what we look like, where we come from, how clever or popular we are or what our history is; we are precious to God and he loves us with a perfect love.

**Do you know how much God loves you?**

Let me finish with this prayer.

Loving and creator God,

**You love us with a love beyond anything we could ever imagine. In the humdrum of our daily lives, we ask that your kingdom will break open. We ask that you will reach out your hand to us and give us the grace to take it. We ask that you will speak to us in the silence of our hearts. We ask for ears to hear, eyes to see and a heart to know that we are loved beyond measure. And we ask all of this in complete trust of your infinite love and mercy.**  
Amen.

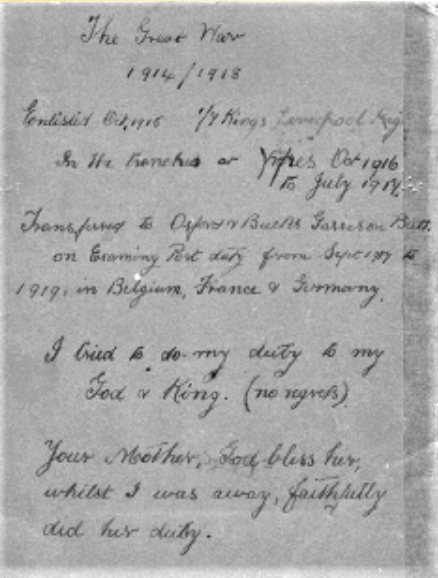


Two books have really stood out to me this year and a third book, which we haven't yet recommended – but I will come to it in a bit – as they are all focused in some way on an English way of life that is instantly recognisable to those of us who are lucky enough to remember parents and grandparents who lived through the Great War and/or the Second World War.

I recently came across a photograph of a card that my great-grandfather wrote about his service in the First World War and what is notable about his comments are the words 'I tried to do my duty to my God and King (no regrets). Your mother, God bless her, whilst I was away, faithfully did her duty.' The sacrifices that were made by the many who served during this time still resonate today and when I pick up a book that helps me to re-imagine the hardships faced by those men and women whose lives were forever shaped by those years, I think it's a priceless gift and I am truly sorry when the last page is turned.

**Still Life** by Sarah Winman is such a book – this is a tale that helps you to reconnect with what it means to be human; it really is a testament to the relationships in life, forged in adversity, that bind us and make us whole. The novel opens with the main character, Ulysses Temper, as an English soldier in Tuscany, Italy in 1944, who then returns to post-war Britain and the devastation of the East End. He slots back into the greyness of ordinary working-class life, living above his workplace, the Stoat and Parrot pub. Ulysses was named after a winning greyhound dog - but as in all things literary, the main protagonist's name gives us the biggest clue as to the nature of this novel, as we turn to Tennyson's poem of the same name. In this excerpt, Ulysses speaks to his fellow seafarers and calls them to join him on a journey to an unknown destination, with an undefined outcome, but with the certainty of pushing across boundaries to seek a better world:

... Come, my friends,  
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.



# St Peter's Book Club

*Alison McGarr reviews and recommends a range of reading material, with some poignant family memoirs.*

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

Ulysses Temper does exactly this in **Still Life**, out of the ruins and destruction of war, he goes on the journey of life, he does his duty, he looks after his family and his friends and he builds a life – a still life, but still life.

The next really good read, which we haven't got round to recommending, but we will do, is **Behind the Scenes at the Museum** by Kate Atkinson. This is another wartime story that spans over a hundred years and is set in the working-class landscape of York. The themes are similar to **Still Life** but with a more cold-hearted approach – some might call it gritty realism. Although narrated by Ruby Lennox, who is chronicling her life from the 1950s onwards, it is actually the story of five generations of women and the impact of war and loss on all of their lives.

Across each generation, it is the mother who is the pivotal character and as each woman ages and lives the life that is thrust upon her, she comes to realise that the life she has is not the life she would have chosen. It's an interesting study of the lives of working-class women and one that resonates with my great-grandfather's sentiment: 'Your mother, God bless her, whilst I was away, faithfully did her duty.'

From the same author is **Life after Life** – Ursula, the main character, dies at birth or does she? Atkinson employs a narrative technique that treats life as a constant fine line between death and survival. We see Ursula die and live again and with each reincarnation she

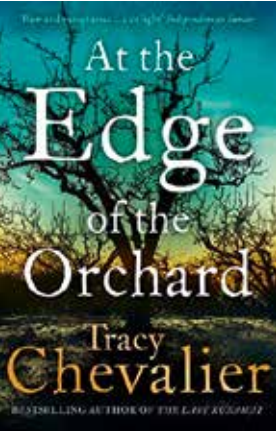
goes off in a slightly different direction as her life gradually twists and turns towards the Second World War. To continue with the poetry theme, the novel allows the reader to see 'two roads diverged in a yellow wood,' and then takes us down both roads to see what the outcome might be (**Two Roads Not Taken** by Robert Frost). The description of the Blitz in London during the Second World War allows us an insight into the savagery of war and its impact on the lives of ordinary men, women and children who were thrown into a world where nothing made sense.

But in the midst of all the chaos, it is also a beautifully crafted story about an England that many of us might recognise – it's set in the first half of the 20th century and it's the English garden, the country lanes, family life, summer days, winter snow, picnics, tea, cricket and lots of family arguments!

We have recommended other really good books this year which I have listed below – but the three I have described above are, for me, definitely keepers!

**After You'd Gone** by Maggie O'Farrell  
This book is about Alice, a young Scottish woman living in London. On a return trip to Scotland, she sees something that shocks her so much that she leaves. On her return to London, she is in a coma and her family rush to her bedside. The question is – what has happened and why did she leave Scotland so suddenly?

**The Island of Missing Trees** by Elif Shafak  
A novel split between Cyprus and London. If you are unaware of the turbulent history of the island, then this novel provides an informative account of its difficult past.



**At the Edge of the Orchard** by Tracy Chevalier  
The Goodenough family have moved to the Black Swamp in Ohio in 1838 – if they can establish an orchard, they can claim the land.

**Oh William** by Elizabeth Strout  
A story about Lucy and her relationship with her now ex-first husband, William. It's also a reflection on how she is still learning about herself at 63.

**The French House** by Jacquie Bloese  
Set in Nazi-occupied Guernsey, the novel follows the lives of several inhabitants during the occupation. An interesting insight into life in Guernsey during the war years.

**An Experiment in Love** by Hilary Mantel  
The story follows Carmel from her childhood at a Catholic high school in the north (maybe Harrytown) and moves onto her college life in London.

**The Marriage Portrait** by Maggie O'Farrell  
The setting is Italy in the 1560s. Lucrezia is only 12 when her parents

identify her as the intended spouse of the Duke of Ferrara, after her older sister, his fiancée, dies. She is dead within a year of the marriage.

**A Terrible Kindness** by Joe Browning Wroe  
Based on the Aberfan disaster in Wales – 19 year-old William Lavery, a recently graduated embalmer, responds to the call for embalmers to volunteer to help with preparing bodies for burial. This is more a journey of discovery than a tale about the Aberfan disaster.

**Lessons in Chemistry** by Bonnie Garmus  
Elizabeth Zott is a chemist in corporate America in the 1960s. This novel explains the difficulties she encounters along the way. It's very good!

**Cloud Cuckoo Land** by Anthony Doerr  
This is a book that connects five characters over hundreds of years through their relationship to a single book.

**Other Women** by Emma Flint  
A novel set in 1923 after the Great War and Beatrice Cade, an unmarried and childless woman, decides to make a new life in London with devastating consequences. Based on a true story – an interesting insight into post-war Britain.

**The Murder Road** by Stephen Booth  
Set in the Peak District - a lorry driver is lured down a country lane leading to a tiny hamlet, where it gets wedged under a railway bridge. He is then brutally murdered.

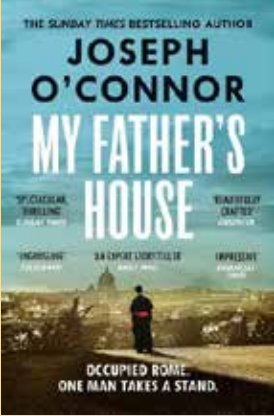
**Bel Canto** by Ann Patchett  
It is a birthday party in honour of Mr Hosokawa, a Japanese tycoon. An opera singer performs and at the conclusion of the performance, the lights go off and when they come back on, the party find themselves hostages.

**Small Miracles** by Anne Booth  
1995. The order of the Sisters of Saint Philomena has just three nuns left: Sisters Margaret, Bridget and Cecilia. Their home needs repairs but they have no savings, no money coming their way and no new novices.

**Kala** by Colin Walsh  
A teenage coming-of-age mystery set in Ireland. Kala goes missing and 15 years later her friends return to find out what really happened to her.

**Lady and the Unicorn** by Tracy Chevalier  
This novel provides a fictionalised history of the Unicorn tapestries, real works of art that are now on display in the Musée de Cluny.

**The Tide Between Us** by Olive Collins  
This story tells the harrowing story of young Irish children sold into slavery to the Caribbean.



**My Father's House** by Joseph O'Connor  
This is a story based on the true story of Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty. It's set in Rome in 1943 and it is about a group of people who, under the guise of a choir, set up an Escape Line to help POWs escape.

Thank you to those who have recommended a book for us to read – we are always on the lookout for a good book, so if you buy any good holiday books and would like to recommend an author or a book, please contact Alison McGarr on 07792 107152 or by Email at [ajmcgarr68@outlook.com](mailto:ajmcgarr68@outlook.com).  
  
We are continuing with our new way of running the Book Club; we are enjoying going out for dinner every 2-3 months. We discuss the books we have read over a glass of wine (or a soft drink if you prefer) and a nice meal! If you would like to join us, our next get-together will be sometime in September – please look out for notifications of the time and place in the newsletter.



# St Peter's Helpers

St Peter's Helpers welcomed new and existing volunteers to a 'Say Hello social' recently, where volunteers had the chance to meet others involved in different activities and relax together.

As well as the fantastic ongoing work of so many groups at St Peter's such as LAMBS, Bereavement Group and many more, the team of volunteers at St Peter's Helpers organises the following regular activities:

- Cuppa and Chat / Light Lunch and Chat - monthly
- Friendly telephone calls - regular
- Card making sessions (small group) - every other month
- Refugee support sessions - weekly
- Refugee clothing organisation - weekly
- Healing Mass with light lunch - twice yearly
- Special deliveries - Christmas and Easter
- Christmas party - 12th December
- Appeals



Thank you to all our volunteers! Thanks also to the children of our three Primary Schools who make gifts and cards when we ask them. We were delighted to welcome children from St Peter's to our July 'Cuppa and Chat' who chatted to our guests and served refreshments.

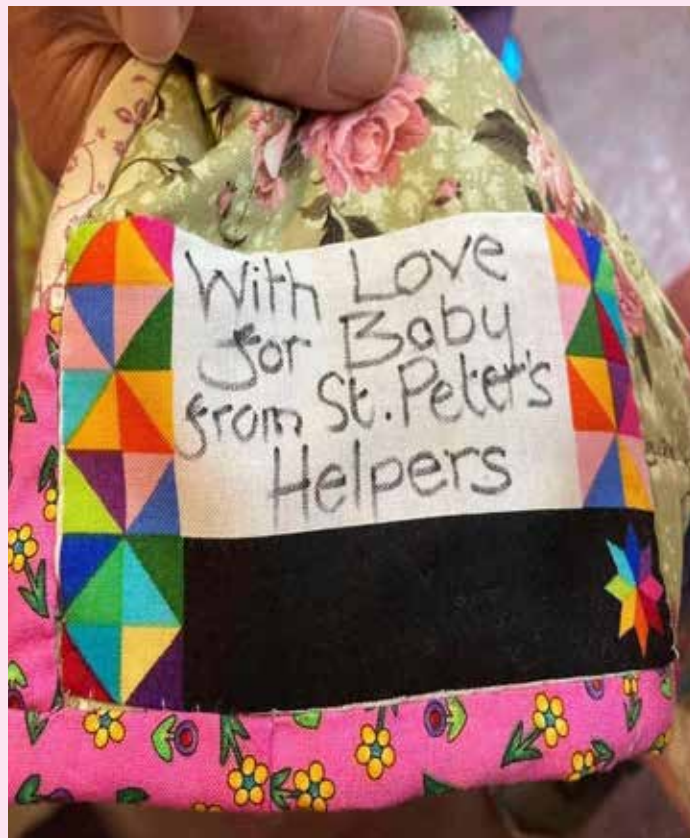
We look forward to some very special guests from our schools for our Christmas Party on 12th December!

Particular thanks to the parish for their outstanding support for the appeal

to help vulnerable families over the year; this really made a difference to individuals in need.

If you'd like to know more, get involved, or know someone who would like to be on our list for a little friendly support, get in touch: [stpetershelpers@gmail.com](mailto:stpetershelpers@gmail.com) or ring and leave a message in the parish office.

Upcoming dates are advertised in the newsletter or on our website: <https://sites.google.com/view/st-peters-helpers/home>.



## Here's a list of the parish groups and activities at St Peter's

### Celebrating liturgy

Altar linen  
Christine Slater: 07954 332651

Altar servers  
Fr Peter

Church cleaners  
Margaret King: 0161 483 4584

Eucharistic ministers  
Parish office  
[admin@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk](mailto:admin@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk)  
0161 483 3476

Flower arrangers  
Colette Christie: 0161 427 4982  
[colette.christie4982@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:colette.christie4982@hotmail.co.uk)

Lay-led liturgy  
Rachel McKay: 0161 487 1659  
[mckay7897@hotmail.com](mailto:mckay7897@hotmail.com)

Adult and junior choirs  
Eileen Rigg: 01625 872948  
[emrigg@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:emrigg@hotmail.co.uk)

Folk group  
Steph Leyden: 0161 456 6285  
[stephleyden@icloud.com](mailto:stephleyden@icloud.com)

Piety stall  
Parish office  
[admin@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk](mailto:admin@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk)  
0161 483 3476

Readers  
Parish office  
[admin@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk](mailto:admin@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk)  
0161 483 3476

Welcomers/stewarding  
Parish office  
[admin@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk](mailto:admin@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk)  
0161 483 3476

### Creating social activity

Book club  
Alison McGarr: 07792 107152  
[ajmcgarr68@outlook.com](mailto:ajmcgarr68@outlook.com)

Men's group  
John McKay:  
07715 362403

Parish newsletter  
Parish office  
[admin@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk](mailto:admin@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk)  
0161 483 3476

Parish noticeboards  
[juliewilliams10@gmail.com](mailto:juliewilliams10@gmail.com)

Parish website  
Anne-Marie Bailey:  
[ambailey@cheerful.com](mailto:ambailey@cheerful.com)

Special events  
Helen Lyons: 07854 928072  
[helenlyons1957@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:helenlyons1957@hotmail.co.uk)

Tea and Coffees, after Mass  
Rachel McKay: 0161 487 1659  
[mckay7897@hotmail.com](mailto:mckay7897@hotmail.com)

Theatre group  
Tony Martin: 0161 483 7720  
[tony.martin@ntlworld.com](mailto:tony.martin@ntlworld.com)

Walking group  
Tony Martin: 0161 483 7720  
[tony.martin@ntlworld.com](mailto:tony.martin@ntlworld.com)

### Exploring faith

Alpha and Sycamore programmes  
Rachel McKay: 0161 487 1659  
[mckay7897@hotmail.com](mailto:mckay7897@hotmail.com)

Baptism programme  
Anne-Marie Gallogly  
Karen Haines - [justasec55@hotmail.com](mailto:justasec55@hotmail.com)

Confirmation programme  
Fr Peter  
[petersharrocks@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk](mailto:petersharrocks@stpetershazeltgrove.org.uk)

First sacraments preparation  
Teresa Thiele: 07778 848709  
[terrythiele@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:terrythiele@hotmail.co.uk)

Marriage preparation  
Fr Peter

RCIA - Enquirers group  
Tony Martin 0161 483 7720  
[tony.martin@ntlworld.com](mailto:tony.martin@ntlworld.com)

Vocations  
Fr Peter

Names and contact details are correct at the time the magazine went to print, but are subject to change.

### Sharing faith

Centering prayer  
Mike O'Malley: 0161 483 8296  
[michaeldomalley@sky.com](mailto:michaeldomalley@sky.com)

Footsteps  
Anne-Marie Bailey: 0161 456 2213  
[footsteps2020@mail.com](mailto:footsteps2020@mail.com)

Guided prayer  
Mike O'Malley: 0161 483 8296  
[michaeldomalley@sky.com](mailto:michaeldomalley@sky.com)

Holy hour and prayer ministry  
Laura Small: 01625 876 752  
[laurasmall@hotmail.com](mailto:laurasmall@hotmail.com)

LPA liaison  
Julie Williams: 0161 285 0244  
[juliewilliams10@gmail.com](mailto:juliewilliams10@gmail.com)

Mothers' prayers  
Teresa Thiele: 07778 848709  
[terrythiele@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:terrythiele@hotmail.co.uk)

Praise and worship  
Laura Small: 01625 876 752  
[laurasmall@hotmail.com](mailto:laurasmall@hotmail.com)

Rosary groups: adult and children  
Laura Small: 01625 876 752  
[laurasmall@hotmail.com](mailto:laurasmall@hotmail.com)

Scripture group  
Mike O'Malley: 0161 483 8296  
[michaeldomalley@sky.com](mailto:michaeldomalley@sky.com)

### Supporting families and youth

Bereavement support  
Helen Lyons: 07854 928072

TOAST (Time On A Sunday Together)  
Children's liturgy  
Teresa Thiele: 07778 848709  
[terrythiele@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:terrythiele@hotmail.co.uk)

Little fishes  
Anne Wroe: 07763 387001  
[anne.wroe@sky.com](mailto:anne.wroe@sky.com)

Marriage and family life group  
David Small: 01625 876 752

SPY (St Peter's Youth) group  
David Small: 01625 876 752

### Outreaching in the community

Hospital chaplaincy  
Chaplaincy Office: 0161 419 5889

Hospital Chaplaincy (Emergency)  
Hospital switchboard will bleep  
0161 483 1010

Via St Peter's  
0161 483 3476  
[petersharrocks@stpeterhazeltgrove.org.uk](mailto:petersharrocks@stpeterhazeltgrove.org.uk)

LAMBS Additional Needs Group  
Kath Coll: 07592 755980  
Brenda Martin: 0161 483 7720  
[brenmart46@gmail.com](mailto:brenmart46@gmail.com)

Lenten lunches  
Helen Lyons: 07854 928072  
Jackie Mackay: 0161 483 6348

Missio  
Margaret King: 0161 483 4584  
Fiona Preece: 0161 456 4319

Schools chaplaincy  
St Peter's  
Fr P Sharrocks: 0161 483 2431  
0161 483 3476

St Simon's  
Fr P Sharrocks: 0161 483 9696  
0161 483 3476

St James' High School - Via School  
0161 482 6900, [office@stjamesche.org.uk](mailto:office@stjamesche.org.uk)

Harrytown High School - Via School  
0161 430 5277  
[office@harrytown.stockport.sch.uk](mailto:office@harrytown.stockport.sch.uk)

Aquinas 6th form college  
0161 483 3237  
Chaplain  
[Carmel.Scanlon@aquinas.ac.uk](mailto:Carmel.Scanlon@aquinas.ac.uk)

St Peter's Helpers  
[stpetershelpers@gmail.com](mailto:stpetershelpers@gmail.com)  
0161 483 3476

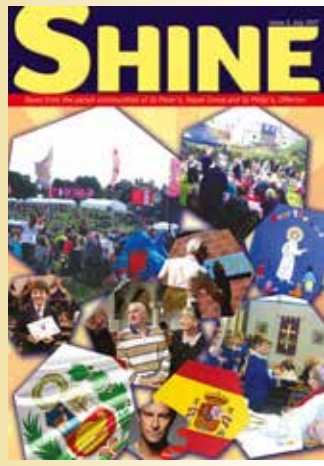
St Peter's Refugee Project  
Alison McGarr: 07792 107152  
[ajmcgarr68@outlook.com](mailto:ajmcgarr68@outlook.com)

Understanding Autism Group  
Maura Beesley  
[mkbreesley@aol.com](mailto:mkbreesley@aol.com)

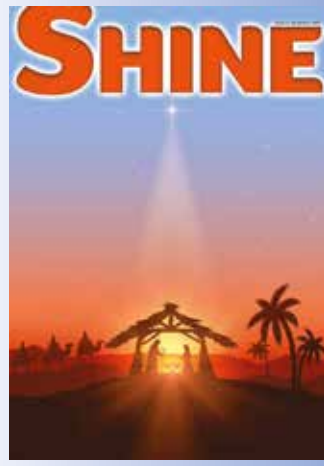




Issue 1, April 2017



Issue 2, July 17



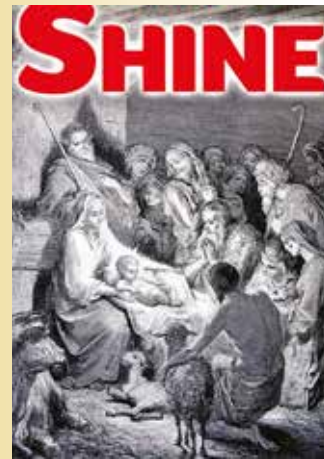
Issue 3, December



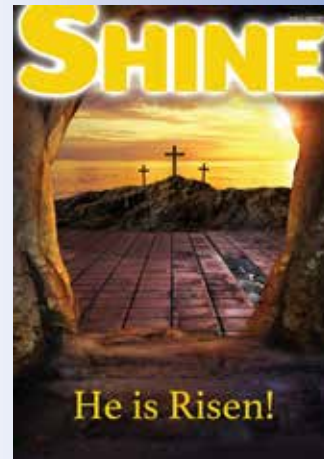
Issue 4, April 2018



Issue 5, September 2018



Issue 6, December



Issue 7, April 2019



Issue 8, September 2019



Issue 9, December



Issue 10, May 2020



Issue 11, December 2020



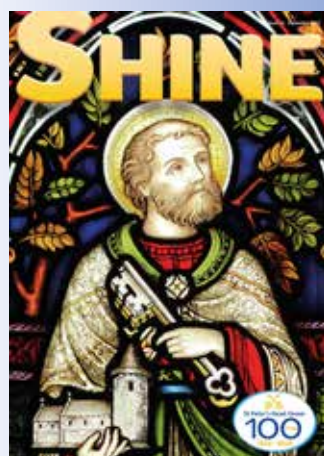
Issue 12, June 2021



Issue 13, July 2022



Issue 14, December 2022



Issue 15, September 2022

You can catch up on any previous issues of Shine on our website: [www.stpeterscatholic.church](http://www.stpeterscatholic.church). They're currently at the bottom of the home page.