

FAN THE FLAME



CME NEWSLETTER

Welcome to your new CME newsletter where each quarter we'll provide you with details of upcoming courses, book recommendations, a wellbeing update, handy contacts and much more. Our hope is that it will help *'fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands'* (2 Tim. 1:6) and flourish in the role to which you have been called.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Meet the CME Officer.
- Recommendations for reading.
- Wellbeing from Canon Neil Kelley.
- Building accessible communities.
- Summer dates for your diary, both inside and outside the diocese.
- Sabbatical reflection from Helen Scamman.

HANDY CONTACT - THE REVD MIKE PRINT

I'm a local boy growing up in Mawdesley I went to St Michael's CE High School in Chorley, and then Runshaw College Leyland. I'm came to faith through reading C.S. Lewis and benefited from evangelical engagement with the Scriptures. After training at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford I was an Assistant Curate in Padiham, had my first incumbency in Chorley, before taking up two roles as Parish Priest of Langho and CME Officer for the diocese. On moving to Langho I took up running, which was a bit daft given all the hills in the Ribble Valley, but so far enjoying the challenge. I have a wife who amongst many other things works at St Leonard's CE Primary School where our daughter (6yo) attends. As a parish we're currently working through the Diocesan Renewal Programme (DRP) which we're finding an enjoyable challenge. If I can help in anyway please do send me an email (see below).

Website: www.blackburn.anglican.org/training-grants

CME Officer: mike.print@blackburn.anglican.org

Events Coordinator: claire.beattie@blackburn.anglican.org

BELONGING WITHOUT BARRIERS: BUILDING ACCESSIBLE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES



Our Diocese, as part of the Church of England, is committed to removing the barriers that Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people face within the church. We want all people to be able to fully belong and participate in the life, mission and ministry of the church. This means enabling all people to be able to flourish and grow as disciples and ministers, regardless of any physical, sensory or cognitive difference. A fully accessible worshipping community, enables the full belonging and participation of Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people. We want to see the gifts of all people to be released to enrich all that the church is and becoming.

Training and Resources: Other opportunities for us to develop our awareness and understanding includes accessing training and resources. On Wednesday 15th April, at 12 noon, a webinar entitled ‘Neurodiversity and the Church’ is being held. This webinar, for church leadership teams, will explore the challenges faced by neurodivergent children, young people and adults, and their supporting families. It will detail some of the steps which parishes can relatively easily take to help those who are neurodivergent to participate fully in church life. The webinar will be presented

by Dr Naomi Fox, Founder of Growing Hope, which provides advice to churches and free therapy services for children, and Mark Arnold, Additional Needs Ministry Director at Urban Saints and Co-Founder of the Additional Needs Alliance. More information can be found [here](#). Lynn McCann, an experienced educator and outreach specialist in autism education, based in Leyland, has launched a website, [Included by Grace](#), which includes resources and discussions about making church accessible for all. [Belonging Without Barriers](#), an excellent handbook has just been published by the Bible Reading Fellowship. This book casts a vision of inclusion and full belonging within our churches and other Christian communities for those with additional needs. It explores the theological basis for this vision and unpacks what it means to be the body of Christ. The book is a practical guide outlining a range of different experiences that we are likely to encounter. Each chapter contains up to date research, personal accounts, interviews and a range of specific, actionable ideas including top tips for change.



BELONGING WITHOUT BARRIERS: CONTINUED...



Accessibility and Participation Stories from around our Diocese:

Making our buildings accessible and creating environments where people with a wide range of disabilities and differences can be present is important. Since the launch of the Disability Project grant, we have supported our churches in obtaining over £250,000 in funding to improve the accessibility of our spaces for all to worship. The following examples illustrate how three churches are working to improve accessibility and participation.

After the installation of an accessible toilet, Rufford, St Mary is now able to run a Lyrics and Laughter group.

Oswaldtwistle, Immanuel have upgraded their sound system so that wherever people are in the building they can hear the service.

Preston Minster has been able to improve their quiet spaces providing much needed fidgets, lights and weighted blankets. They were able to purchase a licence to “Widget” software which allows them to create visual timetables as well as visual memory verses and key truths to support children who have limited communication – this is being used across the age groups including youth. Paired with talking buttons this allows all children to participate in the sessions.

Accessible Buildings and Funding

Support: The Disability Project closed to applications from the Northern dioceses earlier this year, but we are still keen to support any church wishing to make their buildings more accessible and inclusive. For advice, please contact: Jamie Skuse, our Church Buildings Support Officer: jamie.skuse@blackburn.anglican.org

Sarah Noke, Community Development Funding Officer, keeps up to date with the latest funding opportunities; she is happy to provide support with applications to grant-making bodies: sarah.noke@blackburn.anglican.org

Diocesan Contacts: Our team members would love to hear from you so that we can work together to remove barriers and build accessible worshipping communities:

The Revd Mike Print, our CME Officer, is able to provide accessible and practical information to support our clergy in their ministries.

mike.print@blackburn.anglican.org

Joy Rushton, our Being Witnesses Manager, is a member of the Church of England Disability Advisers’ network. Through this group, she is able to access information on a range of ways to improve accessibility and inclusion. She is knowledgeable about people in our diocese who have areas of expertise and would love to support networking. Joy.Rushton@blackburn.anglican.org

Sarah Earnshaw, our Children’s Work Adviser, has a wealth of experience. She leads and organises training to ensure that children are fully embraced, included, and able to contribute meaningfully. For advice, please contact: Sarah.Earnshaw@blackburn.anglican.org

THE REVD CANON NEIL KELLEY ASSISTANT ARCHDEACON (CLERGY WELLBEING)



If you have recently attended a Clergy Study Day you will have seen an invitation (via a QR code) to take part in this year's Clergy Wellbeing Survey. If you are like me, your heart sinks at the thought of yet 'another form to fill in' or 'another email to read!' However, it is really helpful if people can take the time to fill these in as this is one of the primary ways we can ascertain what people may be struggling with in ministry or where new/more resources may need to be placed.

In a national report on Clergy Wellbeing published at the end of last year, the main areas of concern reported were tiredness (relating to both the quantity and the nature of ordained ministry), isolation (which may be geographical, collegial, social, theological or role-related), demoralisation (particularly a lack of vocational fulfilment and discontent with the wider Church) and financial anxiety (short-term and long-term). If any of these resonate with your experience, and you feel you might benefit from some additional support, please do speak to your Area Dean or Archdeacon.

Whilst we do not have a stock of silver bullets, identifying issues and challenges before they become overwhelming is always the first step to finding solutions. Please do visit the clergy wellbeing page of the website if you feel we may be able to help in some way. Do please join me in this prayer for our clergy:

Gracious and Loving God, we thank You for those who shepherd Your people with faith, patience, and compassion. Bless them with strength when the days are long, peace when the burdens feel heavy, and joy that renews their spirit. Guard their hearts from discouragement, their minds from weariness, and their bodies from exhaustion. Surround them with supportive friends, wise counsel, and moments of quiet rest. May they always feel the warmth of Your presence, the guidance of Your Spirit, and the assurance that their labour in love is never in vain. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Email: Canon Neil Kelley:
neil.kelley@blackburn.anglican.org

Visit the Diocesan website for more:
www.blackburn.anglican.org/clergy-wellbeing



THE REVD HELEN SCAMMAN SABBATICAL REFLECTION



A month's sabbatical is such a gift. Because I have a dual role, in the parish as well as Start of Ministry Officer, it took some careful planning and use of overtime and annual leave as well as wonderful colleagues to support it. However, the thing that particularly stood out to me is how much that time needs to be guarded, and how easily it can be nibbled away. I needed to make a decision at the start about how available I would make myself, for the three new funerals and pastoral emergencies that would emerge during those weeks. Everyone has to make their own decisions, but it's important to recognize that every 'yes' you say to a parish need, is a 'no' to your own, perhaps urgent need for rest, renewal, reflection and prayer.

This sabbatical month, a first for me in 24 years' of ministry, was a wonderful combination of retreat, family time, reorganisation, and a much needed chance to just stop and take unhurried time with God. It gave me time and opportunity to visit a much-loved retreat centre, and the privacy to be able to NOT be 'OK' in processing grief from a recent bereavement. It gave me time most of all to reconnect with a love for God, a love for his company, an opportunity to receive from him deeply and to re-engage with worship.

I could happily have had another two months of sabbatical time, of course, but for me, in this time, the sabbatical was an opportunity to walk again with Jesus, in his time, and his way. As I did so, I was able to see how much I need to re-imagine my rhythm of life for this season. I was able to return to parish and my diocesan role with fresh energy and delight in serving Jesus Christ first of all, and then in serving the wonderful people he has sent me to minister among.

'[Jesus said] Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.' Matthew 11: 28 – 29 (The Message Version)

The Revd Helen Scamman is a Start of Ministry Officer and Vicar of St Paul, Caton with Littledale.



JUST 90

Just 90: is a new programme of clergy-only discussions centred around topics which affect those who are ordained in particular ways. There will be some input from a speaker, chance for discussion and networking, all with tea, coffee, and a smile... crucially all served within 90 minutes or less. Dates for the diary:

9th June (1-2.30pm) Parenting Children with Additional Needs - The Revd Canon Anne Beverley

20th July (1-2.30pm) Resting Well - The Revd Mike Barton

COMING SOON - Thinking through Finances - Melaine Wray

Topics being planning:

Creating healthy boundaries;
Personal Spirituality;
Heathly Lifestyle;
Clergy Couples;
Parenting in a Vicarage;
Singleness & Celibacy.

What topics would you like to see discussed? Email the CME Officer.

Blackburn Cathedral

Loads of great events taking place at our cathedral in our centenary year. Click here for more: [Events Guide](#)

EMMANUEL CLERGY STUDY DAYS

We're now able to let you know about the exciting new voluntary study days you're welcome to book on to:

CME Session 1 - **Race and Diversity**, by The Revd Dr André Adefope.
Format - **In person**; Venue - **Clayton House**; When - **18 June 2026**, 9:45am to 2:45pm (Lunch provided).

CME Session 2 - **Preaching Mark**, by The Revd Peter Whittington.
Format - **Online**; When - **15 October 2026**, 10:00am to 1:00pm.

CME Session 3 - **Ethics and Leadership**, by Revd Claire Cooke.
Format - **Online**; When - **12 November 2026**, 10:00am to 1:00pm

To book 'Just 90' or an Emmanuel Clergy Study days go to the CME page on the diocesan website [here](#).

Courses by external providers:

College of Preachers

www.collegeofpreachers.co.uk/events

St George's House

www.stgeorghouse.org

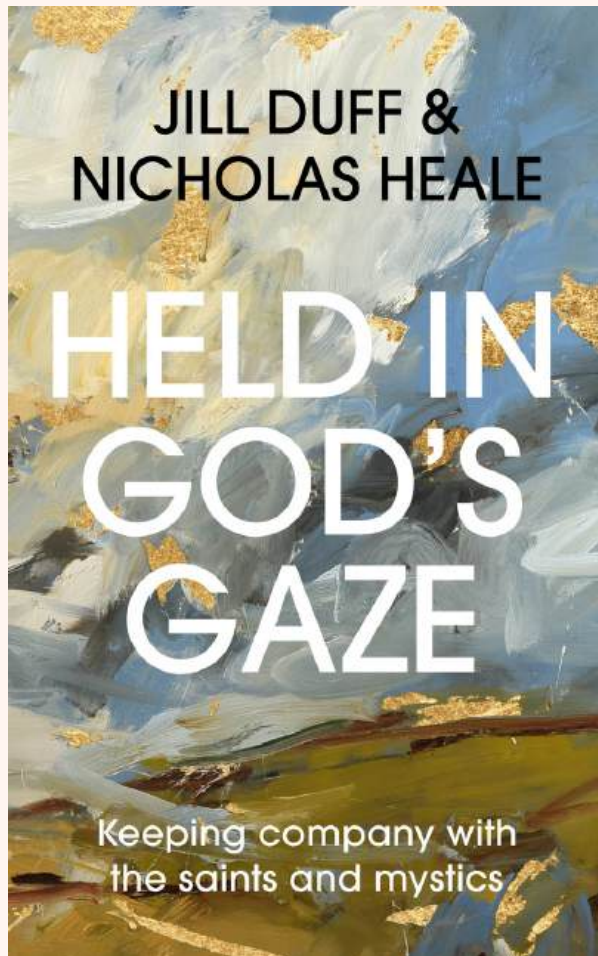
CPAS

<https://www.cpas.org.uk/event>

Pusey House

[Conferences](#)

'HELD IN GOD'S GAZE' BY JILL DUFF & NICHOLAS HEALE



It is with joy that we celebrate the publication of a new book from two members of our own diocese. One of the authors, The Revd Nicholas Heale, introduces us to the work he partnered with the Bishop of Lancaster. He writes:

For several years Bishop Jill and I have laboured to share some of the riches of the Christian spiritual tradition and make them accessible in the light of the realities of life as we actually experience it. Our new book, *Held in God's Gaze: Keeping Company with the Saints and Mystics*, brings together some of our reflections on this experience. We explore the witness of the Desert Fathers and Mothers and the ancient saints, particularly of our own British islands, whose proclamation of the gospel is our foundation. We reflect on some of

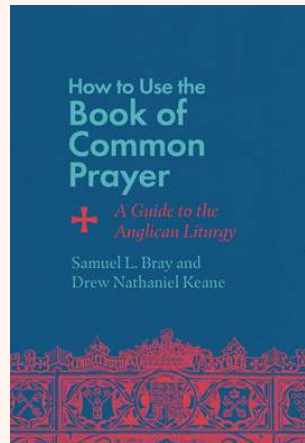
the medieval mystics, with their focus on the sufferings of Jesus as the means of the reconciliation of our own sufferings. We review how St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross challenge the assertiveness of the ego as we reorient ourselves towards the call of God. Finally we consider St Seraphim of Sarov, reviving the life of the Desert in the modern world, and George Herbert, who outlines the aspirations of the soul through poems and hymns. With him, we see the maturing of our spiritual lives as a kind of *homecoming*, but one in which the image and likeness of God has been cleansed and renewed within us. For Bishop Jill, the image of fire is a persistent reflection of the work within us of the Holy Spirit; for me, recollection of the *wounds* of Jesus is a means of knowing his continuing presence with us now. Both perspectives help us know ourselves to be *held in God's gaze*. Along the way, the saints have become our friends.

Those of you who know us will be aware just how different Bishop Jill and I are from each other in outlook and temperament. We can transcend our differences in the light of the *communion of saints* which surrounds us and inspires us as we seek to turn our faces away from the things which could divide us, back to God.

We offer this book as a sign of the spiritual vitality which continues to bear fruit among us. May God's love and the friendship of the saints enrich you too.

The Rt Revd Jill Duff, is the Bishop of Lancaster, and The Revd Nicholas Heale, is the Vicar of St Thomas & St Jude, Blackburn.

***Held in God's Gaze* is published by SPCK (ISBN 9780281091201 or as an eBook 9780281091218), £15.99**

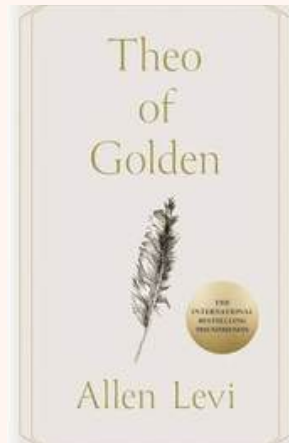


The Revd Mike Print writes:

HOW TO USE THE BCP - BRAY

I remember arriving at my Title parish as a newly minted curate struggling to get used to all of my new responsibilities and the alien image of a cleric bedecked in a clerical shirt which met me in the mirror each morning. The main Common Worship service was familiar enough, though even that had bits which caught out a guy who had worshipped in liturgy-free evangelical church... but then I was handed a small blue book which I could make neither head nor tail. At my deaconing I'd been given a slightly larger maroon version, but other than being larger print, was no more accessible. Over the course of my three years, with the help of a patient TI I slowly grew to appreciate the beauty and faithfulness of the Prayer Book service. I wish I'd had this helpful introduction back then. The authors, who had edited a new International version of the 1662 Prayer Book have produced this easy to read guide which opens up the Prayer Book world and answers the question, what on earth did Cranmer think he was doing? Aimed at evangelicals, especially those who don't really 'do' liturgy, this book also has plenty to teach those who do, and even those who have used the Prayer Book for years. A short helpful guide to have on any cleric's shelf. A sample can be found [here](#).

IVP, 192 pages, £10



The Revd Alex Oehring writes:

THEO OF GOLDEN - LEVI

This evening, I was explaining to my eldest daughter how some books grow our knowledge and inspire us, but the best books touch our hearts and leave us longing to change. Theo of Golden is one of those rare books. I'm so glad I met Theo. His character stirred in me a desire to be a better pastor, friend, husband, and father. His commitment to sitting alongside people, being attentive, and loving them as they are is a powerful reminder of how gentle kindness can deeply impact those the Lord places in our lives. In the story, Theo moves to the quiet town of Golden. In a local café, he becomes captivated by a series of pencil portraits, images of the town's residents. Moved by them, he buys each portrait and gifts it to the person depicted. This simple act leads to a series of meaningful encounters, where lives begin to intertwine. Through Theo's generosity and kindness toward strangers, a deeply moving and beautiful story unfolds.

Fontana, 400 pages, £12.99

Have you read something which might encourage, excite, or inspire another member of the clergy in their ministry? Are you a reader who would love to try newly published books in return for a book review? If so please discuss with our CME Officer, the Revd Mike Print, by emailing: mike.print@blackburn.anglican.org



The Revd Canon David D'Silva writes:

THE CRUCIFIX ON MECCA'S FRONT PORCH - PINAULT

In his book *The Crucifix on Mecca's front Porch* David Pinault does exactly what he sets out to do. The book takes the reader on a shortened version of his own comparative religious studies course that he taught for many years, and at the same time Pinault's claim that the study of another faith enhances the devotion you have to your own rings true. This is because Pinault takes the reader on a journey, beginning with pre-Islamic Mecca we are helped to understand the milieu into which the prophet Muhammad first delivered his message. That message is then explored and contextualised as is the Koran itself. However, the book is not simply a history lesson, it sets out the key areas of comparison between Christianity and Islam and offers an insight into our own Christology by acknowledging the differences between the Jesus of the Bible and of the Islamic tradition. The book then moves into the realm of geopolitical cases studies, though some of these are understandably outdated. In short, the book is a good and engaging read, and I would argue, an essential addition to any reading list for anyone wishing to take engagement with Islam and the Islamic world seriously.

Ignatius, 425 pages, £17.99



The Revd Mike Print writes:

TURN THE SHIP AROUND - MARQUET

Why do so many organisations including the US Navy struggle to raise up leaders? Captain Marquet, former commander of US submarines, believes the leader-follower model employed by the armed forces, but also in many other places (dare I say including the Church) often disempowers and discourages those who are not ultimately in charge whilst simultaneously leaving leaders exhausted, stressed, and overworked. Instead Marquet puts forward his own concept of the leader-leader model pushing decision-making as far down the organisation as possible. Whilst responsibility can never be delegated, Marquet argues, decisions are often better taken by those who are face to face with the issue, not only allowing quicker decisions to be taken, but also freeing up those further up the chain-of-command to focus on the big picture, training up the next generation of leaders, and motivating everyone in the team, organisation, or parish to work together for the common good. Whilst this is a secular book so much or what Marquet shares through his easy-read biographical style strikes me as perfect for parish and diocesan ministry, allowing priests to raise up the next generation of lay and ordained leaders, whilst also making time for rest, retreat, and that all important sabbatical.

Penguin, 272 pages, £10.99