

“Methodist and United Reformed Church News in Darwen”

Working together to learn, live, love and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

December 2025 and January 2026

CENTRAL

BRIGHT STREET

SPRING VALE

TRINITY

TOCKHOLES

URC MINISTER

Rev Gilbert Esambe email: gilbert.esambe@nwsynod.org.uk

Home number 01200 859038 Mobile 07442 923377

METHODIST MINISTER

Rev Dr Joseph Suray . Email : revdrsurray@gmail.com

Mobile: 07858 376362

URC Churches – Central URC, Tockholes URC and Trinity URC/Methodist
For baptisms, marriages and funerals and other enquiries please contact the appropriate church secretary.

Central Website: www.centralurcdarwen.org.uk

Methodist Website: www.darwenmethodists.co.uk

Our magazine is now produced in this format for email and printing purposes. If anyone does not receive a copy or knows of someone who hasn't received a copy, please contact Liz Rutherford 07505 052133 or email lizrutherford@live.co.uk

Minister's Letter – December 2025 / January 2026

Dear friends,

As we step into the season of Advent and prepare our hearts once more for the coming of Christ, I find myself reflecting with deep gratitude on the life and witness of our churches across Lancashire East Missional Partnership this past year. In every congregation, in every committee, in every act of kindness, I have seen signs of God at work through you.

At our recent URC Extraordinary General Assembly, the Church Life Review invited us into a season of honest reflection and renewed commitment. It reminded us that the Church is always being shaped and reshaped by the Spirit, called not simply to preserve what has been, but to imagine what could be. I was struck by its emphasis on courage: the courage to celebrate the faithfulness that already exists among us, and the courage to acknowledge where God is nudging us toward new ways of being Church.

As I look around our partnership, I see that courage lived out in very real ways. I have seen it in your willingness to try new forms of worship; in the hospitality you have offered to neighbours, community groups, and those seeking connection; in the perseverance shown by elders, volunteers, treasurers, and countless others who quietly hold our churches together. Each of these contributions, small or large, visible or unseen, has helped weave the fabric of our shared ministry.

So let me say quite simply and sincerely: **THANK YOU**. Thank you for your faithfulness, your generosity, your patience, and your hope. Thank you for every extra mile walked, every difficult conversation approached with grace, every prayer whispered on behalf of our partnership and its mission. You have made this year richer and more vibrant than you may realise.

As we approach the end of 2025, Advent invites us to pause, to breathe, and to lift our eyes to the light that shines in the darkness. And as we prepare to enter 2026, we are reminded that we do not journey alone. Christ walks ahead of us, the Spirit moves among us, and God's love surrounds us with a faithfulness that does not fail. My prayer is that this Christmas will bring you rest where you are weary, joy where you feel stretched thin, and peace where the year has left you anxious. And as the New Year unfolds, may you step into it with renewed courage — trusting that God has good things yet in store for our congregations and for the communities we serve.

May the light of Christ guide your path, and may the coming year be filled with grace, hope, and unexpected blessings.

With every blessing,
Your friend and Minister
Gilbert Esambe

Gospel of Hope

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11)

Dear Friends,

As I write this Christmas letter it reminds me how Christmas brings mixed feelings to humankind. It is true that for some it brings joy to think of celebrating with families, but for some it brings only fear, loneliness, depression and sadness due to various difficulties they have gone through this year. We cannot deny the fact that Christmas reminds most of us that our lives are being spent rushing around and being hectic with so many unexpected things. For some, shopping becomes important. For others, it is also a time to remember those for whom Christmas brings heartache, a great fear and loneliness. Finally, I imagine most of us have experienced that Christmas can make us feel exhausted. In the midst of such experiences, most of the time, we all go through a kind of fear of the known and unknown that would sometimes appear to crush us.

It is amazing to see how St. Luke reminds us that the greatest event in history had just happened! The Saviour had been born! For hundreds of years, the Israelites had longed to hear such a Gospel of hope, and when it finally took place, amazingly the good news came to the humble shepherds. Having seen the great light, the Shepherds were confused with fear, but an Angel of the Lord said to them, *"Do not be afraid...."* The good news of the birth of Jesus brought a great reassurance to those shepherds who were terrified. Their fear turned into joy as the angels proclaimed the Messiah's birth with a comforting, *"Fear not"* assurance. As a result, the shepherds rushed to see the baby Jesus and then they went out to spread the Gospel of hope that at last the Saviour of the world was born. (Luke 2:8-15).

The God we worship is full of surprises and that is how we are surprised to read that it is the ordinary people like the shepherds in the field who recognised (not the religious or political people of the time) the Messiah. These shepherds may have been the shepherds who supplied the lambs for people to perform sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sins at the temple. It is clear that the angels invited these shepherds to greet the Lamb of God (John 1:36), who would take away the sin of the whole world for ever.

Let us affirm that the greatest good news is that Jesus comes to everyone, whoever we are and whatever we are. Let us remember that He comes to those who are humble in heart to receive Him. Don't think we need extraordinary talents—but God accepts us as we are. Whoever you are, whatever you do, there is an opportunity for you to have Jesus in your life. That is how Jesus becomes your Messiah and your Saviour. Do you look forward to meeting Him in prayer and in His Word each day? During this busy Christmas season, try to re-discover Jesus as your Lord and Saviour - the One whom you feel and whose love is so wonderful that you can't help but share your joy about Him with someone that God brings on your way during this season.

Let us praise Him for all that is past and trust the Lord for all that is hidden from us now because he says, *"Do not be afraid"*. Let us not be afraid, no matter what we face as we move on because we have the Gospel of Hope. So, friends may I wish you all the Gospel of hope in order to have a fearless Christmas and joyful, hopeful New Year 2026.

Shalom my friends, Shalom.

Rev Dr. Joseph B. Suray

One Day at Time to 2026

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEtKfyvTHig>).

May I welcome you into a fresh new day that scripts the beginning of the New Year 2026 for the whole world. As Ellen Goodman says, *"Maybe this year, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives not looking for flaws, but looking for potential."* It is difficult sometimes to imagine how 2025 has gone so soon; yet, while the past year went so fast, it also encourages me to know that there is no end for God's protection, providence and presence in keeping us safe in the days to come, no matter what may be thrown at us.

We know that at times, we felt everything apart from joyful. It is natural that we experienced lows in our spirit, which caused our circumstances to go out of our hands. Some of our sorrow or guilt has been overwhelming. As we read through the Psalms, we encounter those who also felt what we feel today. It is very encouraging to see their prayer reflecting their 'raw deal', they were honest with God and themselves. I am inspired to see how their conversations with God often ended in gratitude for his gifts. May I encourage you that whether you feel happy or sad, do not hesitate to pour out your feelings and emotions before God through prayer. God will give us a reason to rejoice and count his blessings.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hb4JBNDWhOA>)

Without any doubt, recollecting 2025 fills us with gratitude and shows how appropriate Samuel's message to the Israelites many years ago is: *"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far has the LORD helped us'"* (1 Samuel 7:12). As we stand on the verge of 2026, we can say with both humility and confidence that by God's Grace, every day of last year was given to us by God. The memories we retain are a reminder of everything the Lord has done in our lives, ministry and community, and that there is no end to God's goodness and forgiveness (Psalm 23). God has shown us his never-ending mercies so that we are forgiven, accepted and restored in order to walk with him, our head held high, seeing the light for our unknown path. (Psalm 27:1). Now a huge question: what can please us, or how can we keep ourselves happy as we prepare to embrace the new days to come? King David, having gone through all challenging experiences of life, inspires us: *"Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."* (Psalm 37:4). This psalm expects us to take our lives seriously so that we make time for God, His Word, and Prayer and know the meaning of delight in his Holy Presence.

Therefore, may I encourage you to recognise and affirm that God has given you this new day to live with humility, gracefully and to serve him faithfully in order to rejoice. As Elizabeth George says, *"This one simple act of beginning each day with God sets each day on the path of wisdom."* We are filled with gratitude for God's wisdom that enables us to be happy and content. As the Bible declares that God never changes; our very life is a gift from God, who cares for us (Acts 17:28). We are safe in His loving hands and have the confidence to know that God renews His everlasting love for us to enjoy his blessing (James 1:17). Sometimes we wonder how we have managed to be here today. We are reminded that it is only, *"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."* (Lamentations 3:22-24). We have got nothing to boast about; it is not our position or possessions that have sustained us. We are still here to enjoy, and taste and see how God's compassion has not failed and will never diminish.

It is my prayer that God will continue to guide us, comfort us, empower us, and fill us with His joy no matter what circumstances we may face. Let us make our motto of what Benjamin Franklin said, *"Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbours, and let every new year find you a better man [woman]."* Let us continue to know that this is the day that the Lord has made; now we are left with no option than to "Trust and Obey" our Shepherd and Master. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upRoR7ej9Ns>). Therefore, let us ask the Lord to empower us to press on this year with confidence, courage and hope to bring all glory and honour.

Prayer: "Father, I place into your hands, the things I cannot do, the things that I've been through and the way that I should go... **Amen**"

With shalom, my friends shalom,
God bless you
Rev Dr. Joseph B Suray

CENTRAL (Janet Goodship)

We were fortunate to have Gilbert preach at Central recently. He reminded us about thankfulness, referring to the one leper in the Bible who, after having been cured by Jesus, returned to give thanks. Alison and Kevin once again gave their time and energies to run a very successful quiz night in aid of Gift Day. The questions were interesting and not so easy. I happen to know that the winning team were delighted by their (first) success! Many thanks to Alison and Kevin for the work they put in.

The remembrance service was this year led by Barbara. It was really memorable for several reasons. There was a larger than usual congregation and a full choir to sing the anthem. The names of the soldiers on the war memorial were read out and a rose bearing the name of each of them was placed on the memorial table by members of the congregation. This was followed by Barbara reading out letters from a Duckworth Street Church magazine dating from 1917 that she had found. There was a letter from the newly installed minister at Duckworth Street to the soldiers at the front, and a reply from one of them. It was so moving, bringing those war years vividly to life.

The Central Fellowship Group welcomed Sue and Andrea from the Stroke Association at their November meeting. Andrea works for the Stroke Association as a Support Co-ordinator and Sue is a volunteer who has charge of several groups, including the North West Stroke Association. They gave us a presentation about the causes and effects of stroke then told us how the Stroke Association helps stroke survivors and their carers. There are several groups to which stroke survivors can go; these include the choir, gardening club, bowling, aphasia group and others.

It was with great sadness that on that same day we learned of the death of Harry Duxbury, Barbara's husband, who passed away peacefully in hospital. Harry had been unwell for a long time, but previous to his illness had been a regular attender at Central and very involved in the well-being of the church. He was a lovely man, always ready to listen to others and to give a helping hand wherever he could. Our thoughts and prayers are with Barbara, her family and friends.

It will shortly be Advent and Central's choir have started to prepare the music for the special Christmas services. These include Advent Sunday on Nov 30th, the Nativity service on Dec 14th, and Lessons and Carols on the 21st.

Birthday Celebrations: Rosemary Fox, Janet Goodship, Rebecca Laditan (15), David, Timothy, Trevor, Steph, Jo-Anna, Georgia, Keith Haworth, Mel; Andrew, James and Rachel Elliott; Alison's granddaughter Eddie (3), Trish, Karen's granddaughter Evelyn, Dorothy Chappell's great-grandson, Doris' daughter, Nancy's grandson.

Wedding Anniversaries: Dorothy and Jim Chappell, Margaret and Dennis (57), Pauline and Mel, Doris' daughter and husband.

Celebrations: Barbara's grandson Ryan has won a gold award at Scouts, Rachel (Margaret Oldham's great niece), has given birth to a baby boy (mum and baby doing fine).

Prayers - Each week in church we continue to mention people by name in need of our prayers, thinking especially of Barbara and her family and also remembering Doris' husband Raymond, Kathleen Knowles, Margaret Williams and Jean Yates

Barbara and family would like to thank everyone for all the cards flowers and messages of sympathy received on the death of Harry. Your thoughts and prayers have been with us supporting us at this time

Coffee Bar Rota

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 7 th December | Janice Cowell, Elsa Peacock |
| 14 th December | Dorothy Yates, Margaret Burns |
| 21 st December | Beryl Shaw, Pauline Henson |
| 28 th December | Barbara Duxbury, Karen Narramore. |
| 4 th January | Margaret East, Liz Staffa |
| 11 th January | Janice Cowell, Elsa Peacock |
| 18 th January | Dorothy Yates, Margaret Burns |
| 25 th January | Beryl Shaw, Pauline Henson |

Central Fellowship – 2 pm

11th December – Christmas Concert by the Ashleigh Singers with James Loynes

15th January – Beetle Drive

Bible Study 10 am – no bible study for December; January date to be arranged.

Flower Rota

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| December 7 th | David and Alison Elliott |
| December 14 th | 'In Memory of Mum and Dad' the East family |
| December 21 st | 'In Loving Memory of Margaret and Ian Turner ' the family |
| December 28 th | 'In Memory of Robert' The Rutherford family |
| January 4 th | Flower Fund |
| January 11 th | 'In Memory ' Beryl Shaw |
| January 18 th | 'In Memory of Elaine Wilson' from Danny |
| January 25 th | 'In Memory of loved ones' The Grimson family |

Thanks are extended to all those who contributed flowers during 2025. They brighten the Church week by week and are much appreciated by the recipients.

As always, there are vacancies and new contributors would be very welcome. If you would like to remember a loved one or celebrate an occasion in this way, please do not hesitate to speak to me. None of the displays would happen if it wasn't for the dedicated team of flower arrangers, and I sincerely thank them for their commitment.

Margaret Oldham

Communion Rota -2nd Sunday in the month

December – Margaret East (bread), Beryl Shaw

January – Janice Cowell (bread), Eileen Pye

Vestry Duty

December – Elsa Peacock

January – Janice Cowell

Gift Weekend at Central

Thank you to everyone who came to support our quiz which raised £265.

The total amount raised for the whole weekend was £697.50.

A great achievement – thanks to everyone.

DARE CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

This year at Central we are asking for donations of toiletries (shower gels/soap/shampoos). Please could you bring to church on Sunday 14th December prior to our bag packing the following day. These gifts are greatly appreciated by people in need at this time of year.



DARE CHRISTMAS SERVICE WITH CAROLS

Wednesday 17th December 10. 30 am

Please join us in this wonderful service attended by all denominations and faiths together.

TRINITY FELLOWSHIP NEWS (Judith Atkinson)

At the beginning of October we held our annual Autumn clean up, during which we picked up litter and generally tidied up the outside of the church. Many thanks to all those who gave up their time to come along and help.


We were very happy to hear the news that Judith has become a grandma following the birth of a son, Jos Arthur, to Rachel and James. Congratulations to all concerned!

In other celebrations we have wished happy birthday to Ruth, Sarah, Hilda and Stephen. We hope you all enjoyed your special days. And in October, we welcomed Frank as a member of Trinity.


In our prayers recently we have remembered Mary, who is gradually improving but still finding things difficult, Colin and Terry, and Malcolm and Lilian. You will all have noticed the beautiful flowers that we have enjoyed in church over the summer, and we were sorry to hear that Michael, who kindly provided them, has not been well. We wish him all the best.

Fitness & Wellbeing at Trinity Church

Looking to boost your energy, improve flexibility, and enjoy friendly fellowship? Come along to our Fitness & Wellbeing Classes at Trinity Church, Lower Darwen — all are welcome!

 Pilates – Mondays 10–11am & Wednesdays 6–7pm

Find your balance and strengthen from within. Pilates helps improve posture, flexibility, and core strength through calm, controlled movements — perfect for toning the body and easing the mind.

 Zumba Gold – Tuesdays 6–7pm & Thursdays 10–11am

Dance your way to fitness with this fun, low-impact workout! Zumba Gold is ideal for beginners and active older adults, combining great music and simple moves to lift your spirits and keep you moving.

✦ All classes are friendly, inclusive, and designed to help you feel good inside and out. Come as you are, meet new people, and take time each week to care for your wellbeing.

 To book or learn more: Angela Cook – 07904 097711

 Email: missatan23@hotmail.com

TOCKHOLES URC – Christmas Services

7th December 2 pm Toy Service

14th December – service led by John East

21st December - Christingle Service

25th December – Christmas Day 9.15 am with a theme especially for children, led by Rev Terry Young

28th December – the Chapel will be closed.

SPRING VALE METHODIST CHURCH (David Foster)

We have continued to enjoy our weekly Sunday morning services from a variety of preachers and our Sunday School goes from strength to strength.

We celebrated Harvest with a Harvest Supper and Quiz night at the beginning of October, and we raised over £500 for Tear Fund. The following day we celebrated Harvest with All Age Worship led by David Foster.

Our Stay & Play Group supported by a team of volunteers continues to support our local community. We are blessed by the number of groups using our building including Rainbows, Brownies, and Guides together with a Drama Group for young people.

The Bible Group continues to meet every Thursday currently we are looking at and discussing some of the videos produced by Bear Grylls on the Bible.

We have restarted the Mission Group looking at how we can develop the church and reach out to the community. We meet every month.

At the moment we are busy with preparations for Christmas; by the time you read this we will have had our Christmas Fair on 30 November.

There is a Circuit-wide (Darwen, Blackburn, Hyndburn) Carol Service at St. Paul's on 7 December and Spring Vale has its Carol Service on Sunday 21 December followed by a party for our Sunday School and the rest of the church.

We will be having our yearly Carols on the Green in Garden Village on Monday 22 December at 6:00 pm. On Thursday 18 December at 11:45am here at Spring Vale we will be joining in with Lancashire Carers Sing Christmas, the live broadcast from Radio Lancashire.

On Christmas Eve we have a short family service at 6:00pm followed by Christmas Day service at 10:00am with our friends at Bright St.

NEWS FROM BRIGHT STREET METHODIST CHURCH (Karen Rowley)

Greetings from Bright Street. The last few months have been a time of change as we get used to our new Minister Rev Dr Joseph Suray. A very busy time too for Rev Joseph as he settles in and gets to know his congregation, not just here at Bright Street, but at the other churches under his pastoral care. Of course, Rev Joseph is not just our minister but the Superintendent Minister for the West Pennine Moors Circuit, so has many other time consuming duties too. As he continues to settle in we assure him of our support and prayers.

We have a busy time coming up as we prepare for the busy Christmas period. Firstly, we are busy with preparations for our Christmas Fair on the 6th December and the following day we will be joining the other Circuit Churches for a united Carol Service on the 7th December at St Paul's Methodist Church in Blackburn. Our own Carol Service is on the 21st December at 10.30 with our Worship leaders, and at 5 pm on the same day we have a Blue Christmas service, a quiet reflective service of remembrance. On Monday 22nd December, we will be joining Spring Vale for Carols on the Green in Garden Village.

Christmas Day service is at 10 am at Bright Street and we will be joined by our friends from Spring Vale.

Thursday morning Stay and Play is still proving to be as popular as our previous Fridays. We are currently looking forward to our short Nativity and Christmas party when we hope the big man himself will make an appearance, and of course, there'll be lots of games, dancing and eating lots of goodies.

In our Fellowship group we have been studying the book of James. A relatively short book, but with so much to teach us by giving us practical instructions for living a life of active faith, and true discipleship. We're taking a break from James just now to commence our Advent studies in preparation for the coming Christmas season, but will continue with James when we return in January as I'm sure we have much more to learn.

It just leaves me now to wish you all a very happy, joyful Christmas and a happy, blessed, and peaceful 2026 from all at Bright Street.

| | |
|---|---|
|  <p><i>Blue Christmas</i> A service of remembrance and hope</p> <p>21st December, 5pm</p> <p>Darwen Methodist Church @Bright Street</p> |  <p>Bright St Methodist Church, Blackburn RD, Darwen BB3 1QL</p> <p>CHRISTMAS FAIR 6th DEC, 11 am-2 pm</p> <p>Hot food available from 11.45</p> <p>Prize draw cake Stall chocolate tombola cards Bran tub toys bags + various other stalls</p> |
|---|---|



Live from the Studios of BBC Radio Lancashire Blackburn



Calling all Carers at Christmas
A special broadcast sharing
the stories of those who offer
care for others at Christmas



With the combined Lancashire Bands of
The Salvation Army, the Blackburn People's Choir
and special guests



Join the service live at midday or
Hold your own local event at
a time or venue of your choice with
BBC Sounds



Download the carol sheet
Register a venue at:

<https://www.crlancashire.org.uk/lancashire-carers-sing-christmas-2025/>



To tune into [BBC Radio Lancashire](#), use **95.5 FM** for East Lancashire, **103.9 FM** for Central and West Lancashire, and **104.5 FM** for Morecambe Bay. You can also listen on [DAB digital radio](#) (check availability in your area), on [Freeview channel 712](#), or online via the BBC website or other radio apps.

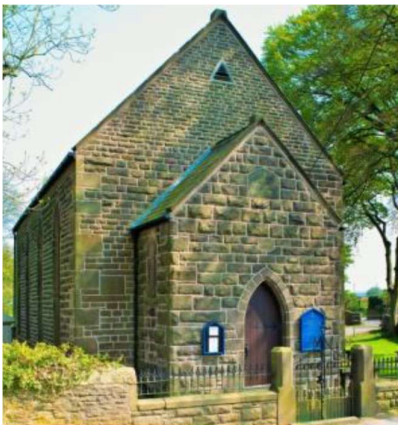
DEADLINE DATES FOR MAGAZINE 2026/2027

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| February/March 2026 | Sunday 18 th January, 2026 |
| April/May 2026 | Sunday 22 nd March, 2026 |
| June/July, 2026 | Sunday 17 th May, 2026 |
| August/September, 2026 | Sunday 19 th July, 2026 |
| October/November, 2026 | Sunday 20 th September, 2026 |
| December 2026/January 2027 | Sunday 22 nd November, 2026 |

URC CHURCH SERVICES IN DECEMBER 2025/JANUARY 2026

| Date | Central | Trinity |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 7 th December | Doreen Goodship | George Grime |
| 14 th December | Barbara Duxbury (Nativity) | Nativity |
| 21 st December | Lessons and Carols | Carols |
| 24 th December (Christmas Eve) | | George Grime |
| 25 th December (Christmas Day) | Barbara Duxbury | George Grime |
| 28 th December | John East | Doreen Goodship |
| 4 th January | Danny Wilson | George Grime |
| 11 th January | Rev Gilbert Esambe (Baptism) | Moderator (Anniversary Service) |
| 18 th January | Barbara Duxbury | George Grime |
| 25 th January | John East | George Grime |

TOCKHOLES URC CHURCH



| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 7 th December (Toy Service) | Barbara Duxbury |
| 14 th December | John East |
| 21 st December | Doreen Goodship |
| 25 th December (Christmas Day) | Rev Terry Young Children's Service |
| 28 th December | CLOSED |
| 4 th January | Rev Gilbert Esambe |
| 11 th January | Doreen Goodship |
| 18 th January | Barbara Duxbury |
| 25 th January | Natalia Litnevski |

CHURCH GROUPS

CENTRAL URC

| Day | Time | Name of Group and Room |
|-----------|-----------------------|---|
| Monday | 9:30-Noon | DARE (Hall and Lounge) |
| | 6.00 pm to 9.00 pm | Ballroom/sequence dancing (Hall) |
| | | |
| Tuesday | 10am to 11:00 am | Yoga (Hall) |
| | 11.30 am to 12.30 pm | Dance Fit Exercise Group (Hall) |
| | 6.00 pm to 9.00 pm | Ballroom/sequence Dancing (Hall) |
| Wednesday | 10.00 am to 1 pm | DARE (Hall and Lounge) |
| | 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm | Ashleigh Singers (Hall) |
| | 5.00 pm to 9.00 pm | Line Dancing (7pm-8pm) Ballroom (Hall) 8 – 9 pm |
| Thursday | 9.00 am to 12.00 noon | P.R.O.B.U.S. alternate weeks (Hall and Lounge) |
| | 10.00 am to 11.30 am | Bible Study once a month (Lounge) |
| | 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm | Church Fellowship once a month (Hall/Lounge) |
| | 7 pm to 9 pm | Beginners Line Dancing/Ballroom |
| Friday | 8.00 am to 10.00 am | Slimming World (Hall) |
| | 11.00 am to 12 noon | Yoga (Hall) |
| Sunday | 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm | Lighthouse of Glory Church Darwen |
| | | |

TIME WELLBEING GROUP - AUTUMN TERM - 1-3 pm at Bright Street

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 5 th December | Speaker: Elizabeth – The Norwegian Fjords |
| 12 th December | Ashleigh Choir – Songs for Christmas |
| 19 th December | Christmas Party |

New term begins Friday 9th January 2026
Any questions ring Elizabeth 01254 776294

DARWEN METHODIST CHURCH AT BRIGHT STREET

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------|---|
| Sunday | 10.30 am | Sunday service – multi-media Contact Karen Rowley 07941 881833 Karenliz1947@gmail.com |
| Monday | 11.30 am – 12.15 pm | Pilates |
| | 7 to 8.45 pm | Fellowship Group |
| Tuesday | 10.30 to 11.30 am | Tai Chi |
| | 6 to 7 pm | Fit n Funky |
| Wednesday | 11am to 12 noon | Strength & Balance |
| | 1 pm to 2 pm | Strength & Balance |
| | 6 to 7 pm | Yoga (for menopausal women) |
| | 7.30 to 9 pm | Trefoil Guild (1st Wednesday of every month) |
| Thursday | 9.30 to 12 noon | Stay & Play Toddler Group |
| | 10 am to 12 noon | Beading Group |
| | 1 pm to 2 pm | Making Memories |
| Friday | 1 to 3pm | “Time” wellbeing Group |
| Saturday | 9-10 am | WW |

SPRING VALE

| | | |
|-----------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Sunday | 10.30 am | Sunday Service & Junior Church |
| Monday | 5 pm | Drama Group |
| Tuesday | 10.30 am to 12.00 noon | Stay and Play Toddler Group |
| Tuesday | 2 pm to 4 pm | Craft Group |
| Tuesday | 5.45 pm to 7.00 pm | Rainbows |
| Wednesday | 5 pm | Drama Group |
| Wednesday | 6.00 pm to 7.30 pm | Brownies |
| Wednesday | 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm | Guides |
| Thursday | 10 am | Lullaby Baby Group |
| Thursday | 6.30 to 9 pm | Bible Study |
| Friday | 7pm | Karate |

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

- 1) Which country first started the tradition of putting up a Christmas Tree?
- 2) Which popular Christmas beverage is also called 'milk punch'?
- 3) How many ghosts show up in *A Christmas Carol*?
- 4) What do people traditionally put on top of their Christmas Tree?
- 5) Where was baby Jesus born?
- 6) What Hollywood actor played six different roles in *The Polar Express*?
- 7) What colour are mistletoe berries?
- 8) Which fairytale was the first gingerbread house inspired by?
- 9) Who invented the Christmas Wreath?
- 10) Where did the tradition of Christmas stocking come from?
- 11) What are the traditional 12 days of Christmas?
- 12) How do you say Merry Christmas in Spanish?
- 13) What was the coldest ever temperature recorded during a UK winter?
- 14) What are the chances of a white Christmas in the UK?
- 15) How many Christmas trees are grown in Europe?
- 16) Where does the Royal Family traditionally celebrate Christmas?
- 17) How many years do Christmas trees grow for before they are sold?
- 18) When do the Royal Family exchange their presents?
- 19) In *Home Alone*, where are the family going on holiday?
- 20) How many Christmas trees are in Buckingham Palace?
- 21) Where does the word *winter* come from?
- 22) How many mince pies are eaten in the UK every year?
- 23) What King was crowned on Christmas Day?
- 24) How many turkeys are eaten in the UK every year?
- 25) Traditionally, how long before Christmas should you start making Christmas cake?
- 26) How many gifts are there in the *12 days of Christmas* song?
- 27) What is the best-selling Christmas song?
- 28) What country has the most reindeer?
- 29) How many Christmas cards are sold in the UK every year?
- 30) Which country first decorated Christmas trees?
- 31) What is the most fragrant real Christmas tree?

Answers in next magazine

Wordsearch – Angels, God’s Helpers

L U A P R O T E C T I O N M M
L E G N A H C R A H J S A I I
U S R E T H G I F O B B E R H
F V I G S O H N S O U L C A P
R C N U G L G H C R E S N C A
E O V A N Y U A N L D R A L R
W R I R I A J I B E A E R E E
O N S D N N N A M R N G E S S
P E I I R G R I A Y I N V B E
H L B A O E A E R O E E I U N
A I L N M L E T Y E L S L R O
I U E U C S P I R I T S E E Y
A S N O I T C U R T S E D H L
S N R E C N A D I U G M P C O
I P N H O J Z E C H A R I A H

Archangel, Burning ones, Cherubs, Cornelius, Daniel, Deliverance, Destruction, Fighters, Gabriel, Guardian, Guidance, Holy angels, Holy ones, Innumerable, Invisible, Isaiah, Jacob, John, Joshua, Mary, Messengers, Miracle, Morning star, Paul, Peter, Powerful, Proclaimed, Protection, Seraphim, Spirit, Zechariah

Answer to last Wordsearch - Faithless

BIBLE READINGS

DECEMBER 2025

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 st | Isaiah 1:1-8 | Psalm 8 |
| 2 nd | Isaiah 1:9-13 | Psalm 25 |
| 3 rd | Isaiah 1:14-20 | Psalm 26 |
| 4 th | Isaiah 2:1-5 | Psalm 16 |
| 5 th | Isaiah 6:1-8 | Psalm 50:1-15 |
| 6 th | Isaiah 7:1-14 | Psalm 150 |
| 7 th | Matthew 3:1-12 | Psalm 72:1-7,18-19 |
| 8 th | Isaiah 11-10 | Psalm 96 |
| 9 th | Isaiah 25:6-10 | Psalm 103 |
| 10 th | Isaiah 26:1-9 | Psalm 145 |
| 11 th | Isaiah 27:1-6 | Psalm 58 |
| 12 th | Isaiah 30:19-26 | Psalm 1 |
| 13 th | Isaiah 35:1-10 | Psalm 40:1-8 |
| 14 th | Matthew 11:2-11 | Psalm 146 |
| 15 th | Malachi 3:1-4 | Psalm 25:3-8 |
| 16 th | Malachi 4:1-6 | Psalm 57:1-3,7-11 |
| 17 th | Isaiah 52:7-10 | Psalm 76 |
| 18 th | Titus 2: 11-14 | Psalm 24 |
| 19 th | Isaiah 40: 3-11 | Psalm 67 |
| 20 th | Luke 1:57-66 | Psalm 73 |
| 21 st | Matthew 1:18-25 | Psalm 80 |
| 22 nd | Proverbs 8:22-31 | Psalm 34:1-6,21-22 |
| 23 rd | Hebrews 1:1-4 | Psalm 97 |
| 24 th | Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7 | Psalm 100 |
| 25 th | Luke 2:1-20 | Psalm 98 |
| 26 th | Acts 7:51-60 | Psalm 30 |
| 27 th | John 21:19b-25 | Psalm 117 |
| 28 th | Matthew 2:13-23 | Psalm 148 |
| 29 th | Philippians 2:5-11 | Psalm 108:1-6 |
| 30 th | Romans 1:1-17 | Psalm 1 |
| 31 st | 2 Timothy 1:8-10 | Psalm 124 |

JANUARY 2026

| | | |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 st | Luke 2:15-21 | Psalm 8 |
| 2 nd | Galatians 4:4-7 | Psalm 96:1-10 |
| 3 rd | 2 Corinthians 1:3-12 | Psalm 96:11-13 |
| 4 th | John 1:1-18 | Psalm 147:12-20 |
| 5 th | John 4:7-26 | Psalm 19 |
| 6 th | Matthew 2:1-12 | Psalm 72 |
| 7 th | 2 Corinthians 1:3-12 | Psalm 139 |
| 8 th | Isaiah 6:1-7 | Psalm 99 |
| 9 th | Ezekiel 43:1-5 | Psalm 116 |
| 10 th | Colossians 1:1-14 | Psalm 103 |
| 11 th | Matthew 3:13-17 | Psalm 29 |
| 12 th | 1 John 1:1-10 | Psalm 119:1-16 |
| 13 th | 1 John 2:1-11 | Psalm 119:17-32 |
| 14 th | 1 John 2:12-14 | Psalm 119:33-48 |
| 15 th | 1 John 2:15-17 | Psalm 119:49-64 |
| 16 th | 1 John 2:18-21 | Psalm 119:65-80 |
| 17 th | 1 John 2:22-28 | Psalm 119:81-96 |
| 18 th | John 1:29-42 | Psalm 40 |
| 19 th | 1 John 2:29-36 | Psalm 119:97-112 |
| 20 th | 1 John 3:7-24 | Psalm 119:113-128 |
| 21 st | 1 John 4:1-16a | Psalm 119:129-144 |
| 22 nd | 1 John 4: 16b-21 | Psalm 119:145-160 |
| 23 rd | 1 John 5:1-12 | Psalm 119:161-168 |
| 24 th | 1 John 5:13-21 | Psalm 119:169-176 |
| 25 th | Matthew 4:12-23 | Psalm 27 |
| 26 th | Joel 1:1-13 | Psalm 120 |
| 27 th | Joel 1:14-20 | Psalm 121 |
| 28 th | Joel 2:1-11 | Psalm 122 |
| 29 th | Joel 2:12-17 | Psalm 123 |
| 30 th | Joel 2:18-29 | Psalm 124 |
| 31 st | Joel 3:1-16 | Psalm 125 |

CHURCH DIRECTORY

CENTRAL:

Secretary: Karen Narramore email karen.narramore@elht.nhs.uk

Room Lettings: Janice Cowell Tel 01254 706379 email: rooms@centralurcdarwen.org.uk

DARWEN METHODIST CHURCH AT BRIGHT STREET

Secretary Karen Rowley
email: secretarydarwenmethodistchurch@gmail.com

Stewards: Angela Burton Tel 07501 277066
Karen Rowley, 2 Lyndhurst Road, Darwen. Tel 07941 881833
Val Hunt Tel: 01254 776667 Mobile: 07967 526341. valeriehunt0412@gmail.com

Worship leaders: Karen Rowley 07941 881833
Jean Fish 07506 613830
Elizabeth Foster 01254 776294

Room Lettings: Val Hunt 35 Coniston Drive, BB3 3BJ 07967 526341 email:
valeriehunt0412@gmail.com

SPRING VALE

Stewards: Chris Allan, 2 Sudell Close, Darwen
David Foster
Duncan Turner

Worship Leader Donna Boothman

Room Lettings: David Foster, 4 Derby Close, Darwen Tel 01254 703858
email: davidfosterld@btinternet.com

TRINITY, LOWER DARWEN

Secretary: George Grime Tel 01254 54305 email: agandjmgrime@aol.com

TOCKHOLES:

Secretary: Kathleen Knowles Tel 01254 706489

CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

Liz Rutherford 4 Earnsdale Ave, Darwen Tel 07505 052133 email: lizrutherford@live.co.uk

FORMAL YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Spring Vale: Guides, Brownies, Rainbows;

Methodist at Bright Street: Brownies, Rainbows

PARENT AND TODDLER GROUPS

Weekday Groups at Spring Vale, Trinity and Bright Street

ENQUIRIES:

URC Churches – Central URC, Tockholes URC and Trinity URC/Methodist

For baptisms, marriages and funerals and any other enquires please contact the appropriate church secretary.

Methodist Churches—please contact the Minister or Stewards.