



# Darwen Churches' Partnership

Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed Churches  
*Working together to learn, live, love and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ*  
Website: [www.churchpartnership.org.uk](http://www.churchpartnership.org.uk)

From the Partnership Chair

## Christmas Tree Festival Update

For the second year in succession, St James' church, Stopes Brow, Lower Darwen will be hosting a Christmas Tree Festival. The event was much acclaimed last year by those who visited it. It will run from 14 - 17 December. **All are welcome at any of the events:**

**Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup>** – Festival opening at 4.00 pm with a youth focus and bands for those in years 6, 7 and 8 who are encouraged to drop in after school.

**Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup>** – Event for older people with local schools involvement in carol singing from 1.00 pm - 24 hours of *prayer for peace across the land* begin at 6.30 pm.

**Friday, 16<sup>th</sup>** – A quiet day focussed on *Peace at Christmas*. Various community groups will be invited to come and light candles for peace across the nation, followed at 6.30 pm by a communion service led by the Bishop of Blackburn. At 7.45 pm a Christmas concert given by the Partnership Choir singing the Roger Jones musical *While Shepherds Watched* ...

**Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup>** – Open from 1.00 pm with a family event at 6.00 pm including a professional firework display outside and supper.



## Lancashire Sings Christmas

Two local hostelrys are taking part this year in *BBC Radio Lancashire Sings Christmas (95.5FM; 103.9FM;DAB)* – the Victoria Hotel in Tockholes as last year and the King Edward VII Hotel in Guide for the first time. This event will take place on Thursday, 22 December from 7.00 – 8.00 pm.

**Anyone is welcome to join in.**



## Christmas Stickers

Bible Society has once again produced a set of free Christmas envelope stickers for use on Christmas cards and greetings to point friends and family to the real Christmas story. Call 01793 418330 to request some (ten per sheet) – please quote 79904. For further details visit [www.christmasunwrapped.org.uk](http://www.christmasunwrapped.org.uk). (Valid until 24<sup>th</sup> December 2011.)

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## Prayer for New Year's Day

The following prayer has been requested for use on 1 January 2012 to celebrate those who serve in the nine Partnership churches as preachers of the Word. The special intention in mind is the dedication of our Local Preachers, Lay Preachers and Readers as well as Ministers and Clergy, who faithfully serve the Partnership churches week by week.

### Prayer of Thanksgiving for Preachers of the Word

Living God, we give you thanks and praise  
for those who serve you week by week  
in the ministry of preaching.

May your mind be in their thinking,  
your heart in their preparing  
and your intention in their planning.

May your breath be in their speaking,  
your word in their meaning  
and your message in their delivery.

May all who listen hear your calling for their lives,  
find your encouragement for the way ahead  
and in this way take part in the everlasting dialogue of faith,  
which you invite each one of us to join  
to your glory now and for ever. **Amen.**

(TDG, 14.xi.11)

## Darwen Churches United in Prayer and Celebration (18-25 January 2012)

A united service for the Darwen churches during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be held at 4.00 pm on Sunday, 22 January 2012 at St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church. There will also be short united prayer times in the following churches in Darwen at 12.05-12.25 pm on:

Wed 18 Jan – Central URC

Mon 23 Jan – Highfield Congregational

Thurs 19 Jan – St Peter's C of E

Tues 24 Jan – Venue to be confirmed

Fri 20 Jan – St Edward's RC

Wed 25 Jan – Trinity UR/Methodist Church

The theme of prayer for Christian unity in 2012 is ***We shall all be changed...*** and has been chosen by the churches in Poland based on 1 Corinthians 15: 51-58. Further details are available on the Churches Together in Britain & Ireland website – [www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer).

## Congratulations and Farewell

At its November meeting the Partnership Enabling Group offered congratulations to the Revd Sarah Moore on her appointment to Cumbria as Area President, where she will serve and represent the URC in developing a fully ecumenical county. On 27<sup>th</sup> November 2011 the Cumbrian leaders of our three denominations signed a new declaration of commitment to work together, to take joint mission initiatives and to develop a joint strategy to optimise the use of church buildings. Here in Darwen, we shall greatly miss Sarah's contribution to the life of the Partnership and wish her well in this new responsibility.

The Partnership farewell service for Sarah will take place on Sunday, 29 January at Central URC at 4.00 pm (venue TBC) to be led by the Revd Terry Dyer, vicar of St James, Over Darwen and St Paul's, Hoddlesden.