

Buxton United Reformed Church  
Hardwick Square East



May 2026

Today, as I write this, Peter and I have been sitting in our back garden having our lunch and drinks during a lovely warm, for Buxton, sunny day. The sky is bright blue and the lawn is covered in part by the fallen yellow catkins of a Himalayan Birch that are on average 9.5 cm long and, if you didn't know better, looking very much like caterpillars amongst the flowering daisies!

The cerise magnolia flowers are welcoming the spring before their leaves appear and below them the Solomen's Seal flowers are starting to bloom. Our many hellebores are setting their seed pods ready to be collected in a good few weeks' time and the roses are starting to sprout into new life. The wall hydrangea will be bursting into flower probably by this weekend if the warm weather carries on. But I haven't mentioned the wonderful noise of the baby birds chirping and adult's wonderful bird song. Spring has really arrived – Praise our God of Creation and that we are able to see, hear and enjoy such a wonderful sights and sounds.



We rejoice and appreciate that **we are able to see and hear** God's handiwork in the confirmation of spring in our back garden.

One phrase in the New Testament I really liked as a young person and I still do now is that found in [John 12 20-21](#) Among those who had come up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They approached Philip with the request, [“Sir, we want to see Jesus.”](#) There was also a book that I had with the title [“We want to see Jesus”](#) and still books can be bought today with the same title.

**Y**esterday, there was a wonderful report in the news of a wee girl called Saffie who was born with a terrible condition called Leber's Congenital Amaurosis of her eyes, that meant she was increasingly more unable to see. Like many other children with the rare condition too, she had very little vision in daylight, and none in low light. It can lead to complete loss of sight by adulthood. Saffie needed to use a torch to see her food to eat her meals and was unsteady on her feet.

It was particularly noticed by her parents when she was five and the prognosis was terrible for Saffie and them to cope with. Now her eyesight has been restored by gene therapy which her parents have described the results as a "miracle".

In 2025, Saffie had life-changing gene therapy at Great Ormond Street Hospital. A modified virus was injected directly into the back of Saffie's eyes, introducing healthy copies of the gene that replaced her faulty gene, into the cells, and enabled her eye to make a protein essential for enhancing her vision at a critical stage of her brain development.

**Saffie can now see** her parents and enjoys activities such as riding her bike, trampolining and swimming. That, for her and her Mum and Dad is a miracle. She can welcome seeing the spring in all its glory too like we are able to do sitting in our back garden.

For Saffie and her parents their **desire for her to see** has been achieved through medical research and that for them is a miracle.

It is hoped, by the researchers involved in this development, that this gene therapy will also be used for other young children born with rare inherited blindness. Now that would be wonderful.

Eileen Blane

# Meet the Mod!

A lovely evening meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> March took place in our church to meet the moderator of East Midlands Synod the Revd. Geoffery Clarke.

Following refreshments of Biscoff cheese cake and scones with tea or coffee, Geoffrey answered our questions and ended our time together with a short Bible study.

It was the first time Geoffrey had visited our church family and we appreciated him coming.

Geoffrey is the third from the right in the photo.



At the end of April Geoffery sent the following letter to all the churches in North and West Derbyshire Resource Area.



STATEMENT FOR THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE  
NORTH & WEST DERBYSHIRE RESOURCE AREA  
CHURCHES (NWDRA) regarding the  
Ministry of  
THE REVD CAROLINE ANDREWS APRIL 2026

Dear Friends,

This Statement is issued following a meeting with the Revd Caroline Andrews and it comes with her consent (and the approval of its content).

On Thursday 16 April Caroline met with myself and the Revd Nicola Furley-Smith, Deputy General Secretary (Ministries), to reflect on the content and recommendations of the Occupational Health Assessment undertaken for the denomination by Thrive Worldwide.

Reflecting on Thrive's Report we concluded, by mutual consent, that Caroline's return to active ministry is not in the best interests of either herself or the churches and that she will pursue the possibility of retirement on the grounds of ill health.

It is fair to say that this decision was made with a measure of reluctance and much sadness on Caroline's part in that she articulated a love for the churches and people of NWDRA and is disappointed not to be able to return to her ministry among you.

From the conversations with some of you within my four-day ministry in NWDRA in Holy Week it was clear that there is much affection and

pastoral concern for Caroline across the six churches and I was able to convey this to Caroline. It was apparent, too, that the ongoing and prolonged uncertainty about whether she would be able to return has, understandably, been increasingly difficult for the churches to navigate.

I shared that assessment with Caroline and she recognised the significance of that for you all. She and I hope that decision to lay down her ministry will bring clarity and certainty to you all.

The Deputy General Secretary encouraged Caroline to give thought as to whether an act of worship to mark the conclusion of her ministry among you might offer the opportunity for minister and churches to commend one another to God and to give thanks for what has been shared in partnership. Ultimately this must be Caroline's decision and whether or not she takes up this option. I will work with her and with you as churches on navigating the next steps.

It is not possible at this stage to confirm definitive details regarding a timeline but Caroline's decision to pursue ill health early retirement means that **the curtailment of her ministry takes effect immediately.**

We will, as a denomination and as Synod, do everything we can to make Caroline's transition as stress-free as possible (for her and for you). This is likely to include her continuing to reside at the manse for a short period ahead of determining where she will make her next home.

Caroline's decision is also being shared with the Convenor and members of Synod's Ordained Ministry and Churches Group and we will endeavour to come alongside you as we discern the way ahead for

ministry within your churches. Please bear with us as we discern how and when best to make this journey with you. From my time with you in Holy Week I know you to be faithful people with generous hearts and minds. I appeal to that as Synod tries to do what is needed.

Caroline joins me in placing on record deep gratitude to all who have ensured that the worship and witness of the six churches continues. We acknowledge that the past year has entailed additional duties and challenges and this is not taken for granted.

Please join me in praying for Caroline: that she may find peace and blessing through having made a difficult decision. In return you will be in my prayers as the reality of this news takes root among you.

I offer this prayer for you and with you:

*God of the empty tomb, the hill of the Ascension and the waiting room for Pentecost, in this season where the reassurance of Easter and the renewed loss of Ascension leads into a time of waiting and vigil for Pentecost, we pray that we may find hope and peace in your abiding presence among us, to navigate the reality of parting and the patience of waiting.*

*Come, Holy Spirit, come!*

*May Caroline and our churches know peace and blessing at this time.*

*We ask this in the name of Jesus.*

*Amen.*

With my personal prayers,      Revd Geoffrey S Clarke, Moderator



## Veggie Boxes /

### Veggie bags

Just a quick shout out for a fairly recent brilliant initiative by Cath and Daniel Sterndale of Waste Not Want Not.

Back in last November 2025 they started having deliveries of fruit and vegetables from the leftover produce of the historic, wholesale market and well-known supplier of Smithfield Market in Manchester. Cath and Daniel put together a mixture of vegetable and fruit into boxes or bags to sell every 2 weeks for £3.

After a slow start this initiative has really grown and I can see why. The veggie box / bag is absolutely amazing value, you get so much produce, enough to last 2 weeks with our family. You never quite know what or how much of an item will be in the box so you have to plan and adjust your meal planning around what's in there, which Phil, as the main chef in our house, has found both challenging and rewarding. We end up eating fruit n veg which we would not normally buy so it's really nice to be eating a bigger variety of our 5 a day! When we have loads of one vegetable, say for example leeks, he has google searched and made some new meals to



use up the leeks which are really yummy and a welcome addition to our staple, usual meals. It's brought variety to our eating! The challenge is to use up the whole box or bag in 2 weeks before you get the next supply!

The cost of the box is now £3.50, but let's be honest, we are not going to complain at that! *(Cath has to pay for the lorry to deliver the produce to Buxton and so needs to cover that expense.)*

And lastly, I challenge you to try one or recommend one to a friend.

Debbie Delight

### ***Buxton URC Sunday services***

3 <sup>rd</sup> May	10:30am	BBC Songs of Praise
10 <sup>th</sup> May	10.30am	Christian Aid Sunday Cath Sterndale
17 <sup>th</sup> May	10:30am	St Peter's Church Brockley
24 <sup>th</sup> May	10:30am	BBC Songs of Praise
31 <sup>st</sup> May	10:30am	Eileen Blane
7 <sup>th</sup> June	10:30am	Cath Sterndale

## Please pray:-

For the Saturday Coffee Mornings on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and 6<sup>th</sup> June

For our Elders and Leaders and others as they plan, prepare and lead our worship each Sunday.



For Revd Caroline Andrews as she makes plans for her early retirement and for the churches in the North and West Derbyshire Resource Area.

For Christian Aid and its Partners as they support people in the grip of urban poverty and help to encourage them to provide food for their families.

That Christian Aid Week this year will be supported generously as churches, communities and households come together to stand alongside people living in poverty around the world.

Wars are devastating ordinary people throughout the world. As we pray for peace let's also pray for the individuals who's live are shattered by war.

Heavenly Father, You are the source of all provision. we lift the poor and needy before You today. Meet their physical and spiritual needs with Your abundance. Provide food for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, and hope for the hopeless. Let Your mercy overflow and open doors of opportunity for them. Thank You for being the God who provides faithfully and abundantly. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. *(Philippians 4 6-7)*

## ***Dates to Remember***

### **Elders and Leaders**

Meeting Wednesday  
20<sup>th</sup> May 2pm at church



***Waste Not Want Not***  
***At Buxton United Reformed Church.***

*Please join with us for*  
***free coffee, cake and company***

***On Saturdays 2<sup>nd</sup> May and 6<sup>th</sup> June***  
***Between 10am and 12midday in the church***

### **Contributions for the magazine**

Thank you everyone who has contributed to this magazine.

*We really do appreciate your contributions so please keep them coming.*

Contributions please for the next magazine to

***Eileen and Peter Blane by 25<sup>th</sup> May 2026.***

*To ensure your magazine is as informative as possible please keep us up-to-date with news and events.*

We are producing only a limited number of printed magazines.

An electronic version is available to read on the church's

website:[www.buxtonurc.org.uk](http://www.buxtonurc.org.uk)



## Christian Aid Week 2026

10th to 16th May

focuses on the power of communities coming together to support people living in poverty.



This Christian Aid Week, your support could help mothers in Nairobi, Kenya, facing the devastating reality of urban poverty and the daily struggle to feed their children.

Most parents wake every single day knowing that they must go and earn money, otherwise their children won't eat that evening. Fridah knows this reality well. But she's determined to protect her grandchildren from hunger.



Through our partner, Beacon of Hope, she's received tools, seeds and training to grow fresh vegetables in a small city space – food she can cook for her family or sell to earn income.

***'Now I can plan. I can buy this; I can buy that. I can help my family.'***



**Searchlight Theatre Company**  
*Performances booked with Buxton fringe*

**At The United Reformed Church – Purple Room: Church (55a)**

## **TITANIC: THE LAST HERO AND THE LAST COWARD –**

Revd John Harper and Joseph Bruce Ismay are both passengers on the ill-fated Titanic. Both have a story to tell, one a hero, the other a coward.

*'A heartfelt and moving tribute to heroism and the common man, an unexpected gem' \*\*\*\* British Theatre Guide*

**15 Jul 7:15pm to 8:20pm £14 (Child and Conc £12)**

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## **1917: THE WOODBINE POET AND PADRE –**

A First World War chaplain is giving out gospels and cigarettes in equal measure. He stayed in his 'vicarage' on the front line becoming a friend and a hero to the lads. Music and poetry of the day are woven into the production.

*'a heartfelt and true tale'. \*\*\*\* Broadway Baby*

**16 Jul 2:45pm to 3:55pm £14 (Child and Conc £12)**

**Bookings via Buxton Opera House 01298 72190**  
or [www.searchlighttheatre.org](http://www.searchlighttheatre.org)



## Buxton United Reformed Church

Website: [www.buxtonurc.org.uk](http://www.buxtonurc.org.uk)

We warmly welcome everyone who wishes to join us for  
Sunday worship

Details of services, including times, can be found inside this magazine  
and on our website.

*We offer a sincere, loving welcome to all in Christian  
Worship.*

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### Activities for young people

- **Rainbows:** for girls aged 5-7      Tues. 5 - 6pm  
Leader: Stephanie Sterndale    (Tel. 07967205209)
- **Brownies:** for girls aged 7-10      Tues. 6 - 7:30pm  
Leader: Cath Sterndale      (Tel. 07973670595)
- **Guides:** for girls aged 10 to 14    Tues. 6pm  
Leader: Stephanie Sterndale    (Tel. 07967205209)