

Proclaiming the Good News of God's Kingdom



METANOIA PROJECT
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Welcome to our newsletter for 2024! Thank you for being on this Metanoia Project adventure with us.

As ever, God has been so faithful and we've really seen Him working in the lives of so many people this year. It's exciting to be part of His plan and we hope you will enjoy reading about it in the following pieces.



Community is at the heart of Metanoia Project with our members committing for a year at a time to 'turning the world upside down' (Acts 17:6). We live by the three attitudes of Communion, Detachment, and Mission, sharing life together and supporting the ministry of Metanoia Project. This stable heart at the centre of our ministry keeps us grounded in the Father's love, centred on Jesus' mission, and fed by the Holy Spirit. Here Augustine, one of our newer community members, shares why he joined and how being one with others in this way helps his own faith life: "I didn't know what to expect from my first year as a member of Community. I know I was hoping to grow closer to God. I have been part of Metanoia Project for many years, having come through the youth ministry myself, and taking the opportunity to be part of Community has been a real blessing. It comes with the assurance

that your path to Jesus is helped with prayer and blessings from a group of individuals who are on the same journey. My personal challenge is prayer, and our Community Days really bring me back to close prayer. I particularly enjoy the moments where we are all gathered as a group to praise God. Another Community Day I enjoyed was visiting the sisters at Hying Monastery. Their hospitality and sharing made me appreciate our three attitudes (of Communion, Detachment, Mission) even more. This year I have witnessed God work through the other members of Metanoia Community bringing people closer to Jesus. I admire the members and volunteers' commitment to bring about 'metanoia' in Preston. In the coming year I hope to experience even more of the love of God through the Metanoia community."

Providing 50 hours of chaplaincy services per week for Corpus Christi High School is a large part of our day-to-day ministry so it would be impossible in a small space to sum up everything we do there! Here are just a few highlights. Two hours a week, we run a group called Community Action for pupils who struggle to stay in class because of their behaviour or who need strong role models. We enjoy building relationships with these pupils who, in the last few weeks have helped us make our Advent Wreaths from foliage found in the school grounds, and helped to set up the two large crib scenes. Our after school groups, which are optional for pupils, include a weekly Mass, our Faith in Action Bronze award group for pupils in years 10 and 11 who recently helped us write parts of our Advent Services, and Chaplaincy Club which has pupils from all year groups. Victoria, in year 9, tells you what she thinks about the group: "We have learnt many different things this year at chaplaincy club. We learnt different ways to pray each week and some of those are the examen, five finger prayer, intercession, the rosary, and many more. We also had so much fun with all the games we played including zip-zap-boing, and splat. The chaplaincy team are so welcoming and make everyone feel comfortable enough to talk to them about anything. Chaplaincy club is a happy environment and is just fun to be in while we also have immersive prayer in our Chapel."



When we were approached by the school, it was the possibility of working with young people who have little or no faith background that persuaded us to take up the contract. It has been fantastic to see some of these young people respond to what they are hearing in school and choose to get involved with our youth groups outside of school. As well as this, the greatest blessing has been to accompany pupils on their Sacramental journey. We prepared Michael, aged 16, to receive Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation last summer having come from a place of no faith at all. We are delighted that he is now one of our Young Leaders and a member of our Community. Alongside this, we prepared three pupils to receive their First Holy Communion and six pupils to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in November when Bishop Paul Swarbrick visited St Clare's Parish within which Corpus Christi is situated. To finish this section, we'll hand over to one of those pupils: "Hi! My name is Erin and I'm a Young Leader in my first year. I have been involved with Metanoia Project for a couple of years and this has led me to some amazing opportunities like receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation this year. I did my preparation through the chaplaincy at school and there were six of us choosing to make this step from a range of year groups. We used activities to learn about the importance of Confirmation and what we were agreeing to whilst also learning more about each other, gaining a better understanding. I was also lucky enough to have been surrounded by such faith-led people who did everything they could to help me. When it came to the actual day I was so nervous. The whole mass I was shaking with a mixture of excitement and nerves but the next thing I knew I was in front of Bishop Paul as he confirmed me and I was so joy-filled. Being surrounded by so much love and support from my family and the other Young Leaders was so special and made the whole evening so amazing and Spirit-led! My day to day life since receiving the Sacrament has been full of the Holy Spirit and His gifts. It's been so great to see all of the opportunities God has given to me and more specifically the opportunities I've received to learn more about Him and my faith with other people who also believe in the same God as I do. I look forward to experiencing what else God has in store for me!!"



Hi! Immy here! What a year it's been. 2024 has been so blessed with beautiful encounters with Jesus and Him leading me to exactly where He wants me. My two-year fixed-term contract came to an end in the Summer Term – but I knew my time at Metanoia Project wasn't quite over and that God still had more in store so I've signed a permanent contract! Since September, as well as continuing to work mainly in Corpus Christi chaplaincy, I've taken on a new role mentoring our Young Leaders, which has been such a fun journey so far. I can't wait to see what the rest of the academic year has in store for our current YOKE candidates. Please continue to keep them in your prayers. Here is what one of the Young Leaders said about their experience: "Hi, my name is Don, and I'm a second-year young leader. I initially joined to try something new and have fun with my friends but over my first year, I came to realise how much deeper it was than that. Being part of Metanoia Project has been invaluable for my faith journey. It gives me opportunities to share my faith with others and to become closer to Jesus through various retreats and youth events. Being a young leader has also given me a chance to support other youths and communities, and provided a firm foundation to my faith that I could build upon in other areas in my life. I love every part of being a young leader, but my favourite moment has to be from our Barmouth Retreat where I really felt close to God. We undertook the Philip Course, and it was incredible. I thoroughly enjoyed it with the other young leaders. The impact Metanoia Project has had on me is immeasurable. My relationship with God has become central in my life. I am a completely different person in terms of my confidence and public speaking. Above all, I treasure every single person I've met as a young leader. The Metanoia Project team, my fellow young leaders, the volunteers, the youth, and everyone I've encountered through our events and retreats have honestly been amazing. They inspire my faith and support me in everything I do. Thank you for taking the time to read this. God bless you and your families, and I hope you have a Merry Christmas!"



Hello, this is Jen to tell you how 2024 has brought an exciting development in us working more closely alongside St Wilfrid's Parish where Metanoia Project is based. For years we have been praying about and identifying different ways to enhance the missionary impetus at St Wilfrid's. We were overjoyed when Fr Chris allowed us to share our vision and I leapt at the chance to work with the parish in this way when Joe and Ruth asked me to take this on. I have always loved parish life in other parishes I've lived in, but have felt a huge call to make St Wilfrid's my own parish over the last few years, with my family stepping into parish roles too – St Wilfrid's is a special place! I have a great passion to see so many personalities working together to bring about goodness, I find it so very exciting to watch parishioners bloom, so it was a huge answer to prayer to be offered this chance to work alongside them! So, in September we began some new prayer times to start gathering parishioners throughout the week. There are now 2 weekly silent Adoration hours, inviting people to experience the peace which only God can give us. The Thursday morning time is encouraging parishioners to come to church earlier in preparation for Mass and the Wednesday evening time proves to be a popular time for people to sit with Jesus on their way home from work. I lead a Holy Hour every Tuesday, which is a time of music, Scripture, reflection and silence, in front of the Blessed Sacrament. There are a regular group of attendees spaced around the church open to receive all Jesus is offering, and keen to chat afterwards about the scriptures used and how God has spoken through the hour. One man regularly tells me he is always hit by a wave of peace on a Tuesday and prays that so many more will experience this too! Every Friday after the 12.15 Mass we gather for Lectio Divina, delving deeper, listening to and sharing all God is speaking to us through His Word, and afterwards eating a soup lunch together, continuing to share what God is doing in our lives. The group is a mixed bunch of all ages and there certainly is a beauty when we meet. I can see a true community of believers forming. Watching young and old mixing, sharing life stories and loving each other is a real privilege to be around. Nina says "I love Lectio Divina, it is an opportunity to meditate on the Gospel of the coming Sunday. The Holy Spirit speaks to us individually and as a group to guide us. It's a beautiful experience. And on Sundays of course, you hear the Gospel again in more joy. Fridays are becoming familiar. Thank you".



As well as these new prayer times we also still lead our fortnightly 'Unveiled' event in church which is an evening of Scripture, short talk, praise and worship, prayer ministry, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and Sacrament of Reconciliation. The last Unveiled of 2024 we focussed on outreach, going out onto the streets to welcome others in to pray. When we gathered to pray before going out, we had a team of around 30 people of all ages who regularly come to Unveiled and who had come to help with the mission. It was a wonderfully blessed evening of fantastic encounters!

As well as these regular prayer times, in October we brought the parish together to celebrate its Patronal feast. A joyful celebration of Mass was followed by food and activities in the parish centre for all ages. With interactive displays about what has gone before, what is happening now, and what the future may be in this parish, parishioners were challenged to stand on the firm foundations that have already been built to enable us to push forward with missionary zeal like St Wilfrid! It was a full house with lots of happiness and unity. We've coordinated other monthly events too – An All Hallows Eve Light party for the children and a Bambinelli Baby Blessing for crib figures. During Gaudete Sunday Mass, many brought their baby Jesus figure to be blessed by Fr Chris and then came to wrap them up after, ready to be opened at Christmas. This was beautiful and moving as so many people shared stories about their Jesus figure – the age, where it is placed and what it means to them. I witnessed so many lives full of the hope a life with Jesus brings.

These new initiatives in the parish are only in their infancy, and we have many more plans to help build God's kingdom here. We believe this includes forming and training a group that will grow out of these regular prayer times to create welcoming/ listening/ prayer teams available for those who drop in to St Wilfrid's, this busy city centre church, during the day. We are excited with all He has in store! Please continue to pray we are guided only by Him.



Glory be to Him Whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine – Ephesians 3:20



Ministry with Students and Young Adults has been busy and lively this year with so much growth both in terms of numbers and in the level of responsibility the students are taking on. Gianna and Elysha, President and Secretary of the UCLan Catholic Society, tell us now all about the past year from their perspective: "The past year has been a vibrant and meaningful journey for Preston's Student and Young Adult community. Every Sunday at St Wilfrid's, students and young adults gather with Joe and Fr. Chris for catechesis, accompanied by a shared meal and social time. On Wednesdays, there's a midday Mass at the Oasis Centre on campus, followed by an evening gathering led by the Catholic Society (CathSoc) to deepen our understanding of the faith. Together, these groups form a joyful and welcoming community, eager to encounter and reflect the presence of our Lord. As well as these weekly events there has been so much else going on and here is a small glimpse of some of those things: In February, we embarked on a retreat to Barmouth, Wales, where we completed the Philip Course, exploring the six parts of the kerygma. After each talk, we broke into small groups to creatively express what we had learned—through drama, music, or prayer.

In March, we celebrated a Passover meal as a preparation for the Last Supper. Together, we delved into the significance of each traditional food in Jewish faith and tradition, reading scripture and following the ritual steps as they would have been observed. June marked the end of the academic year, and we gathered for a celebratory BBQ party to honour our graduating members. CathSoc presented certificates to graduates and those who had made outstanding contributions to our society and church life, making it a heartfelt farewell. Over the summer, we introduced a new committee team and held training sessions to prepare for the upcoming academic year. As part of this preparation, we attended the Catholic Student Network Summit in September, gaining inspiration, guidance, and insights into faithful leadership.



The academic year began with great enthusiasm in September during Fresher's Week. At the UCLan Societies Fair, we were excited to be recognised as a Top 10 Society. Shortly after, we hosted a lively Praise and Worship Karaoke and Games Night, bringing together new and old members alike. In October, the month of Our Lady, we organised a weekly online Rosary. We also began a series of Bible studies on Salvation History, thoughtfully led by our committee team. Each month, we made space for Lectio Divina and social events, all of which are greatly enjoyed. In November, we joined with Lancaster CathSoc for a retreat at Castlerigg Manor. The theme, "Defending Your Faith at University", inspired us through insightful talks, discussions, and faith-filled encounters. As Advent began in December, we engaged in an Advent-themed Lectio Divina, followed by a short Nativity film. To conclude the semester, our CathSoc family gathered for a festive Christmas Dinner Party,



while our Young Adult community attended the Carols Service together before ending the year in gratitude. Every event, session, and gathering has borne abundant fruit in our community, strengthening our bonds and enriching our faith. We are deeply grateful to all who contribute to making these moments possible. As we look ahead, we eagerly await another Spirit-filled year of fellowship and grace." On a person note Gianna adds: "My relationship with God has grown and deepened in ways I never could have imagined. Some of my most cherished moments this year were spent discovering our Lord more intimately during our Wednesday catechesis sessions and recognising His work in the lives of those around me. Being surrounded by my Catholic friends fills me with joy and renews my excitement for the faith we share. I am always learning from them as we support one another in every aspect of our lives. My involvement in the Catholic Society has also taught me the beauty of service and the importance of being present for others in meaningful ways. It is a blessing to be part of this community!"



We would not be able to do even half of these ministries if it wasn't for our amazing volunteers who share their time and talents with us and all those who come into contact with Metanoia Project. We always need more volunteers so, if you are looking for a way to share your gifts – whatever they may be – why not get in touch? Not sure whether it is for you? Listen to Tim speak about his experience: "I volunteer at the Wednesday Drop-In that provides clothing for the homeless. Every week, we offer free clothing and sleeping bags, along with lots of tea and biscuits, to Preston's homeless. We have wonderful supporters, such as churches, schools, charitable organisations, and kind individuals who collect 'nearly new' clothes for us. We speak to each of our guests individually and help them with their requirements in the relaxing, prayerful and respectful

environment of St Wilfrid's church. It would be simplistic to say that I get great satisfaction from helping our guests – it is far more. I get a buzz from speaking to them, catching up with our regulars and helping the new folk to get what they need. We want them all to know that God loves them and however marginalised they may feel outside of the walls of St Wilfrid's, when they are with us, we value them. Helping and encouraging me to do my volunteering is the great bond that exists between the volunteers. We may be of different ages and backgrounds, but we are a great team united in a common cause."



Thank you for your ongoing support! We can never find the words to express how grateful we are for all of you who support us in so many ways, whether that be financially, by giving up your time, through words of encouragement or most importantly prayer.

Please keep going – we need more of all of those things! *I thank my God every time I remember you... I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. (Phil 1:3-5)*

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