

Bowdon Church News

No 769 September 2026

Bowdon Parish
St Mary's, St Luke's and Zone2
The Church of England

A New Chapter for Our Parish


Rev. Dr Andrew Knight, Vicar of Bowdon Parish (Photo: Christine Weekes)

I've now served as your Vicar for two years, and in that time I've seen just how much life, love and faithfulness exists within our parish family. But I've also noticed how easily we become absorbed in the busyness of church life; running services, managing administration, marking the seasons; without always pausing to ask whether we're heading in the right direction.

That's why, over the last year, the church council and I have been on a deliberate journey of listening. We've sought to hear God's voice, to listen carefully to one another, and to tune in to the deeper heartbeat of our parish. We've asked honest questions: Who are we really? What are we genuinely good at? And where might we be missing the mark? What emerged was a picture of a church that is wonderfully diverse, musically gifted, deeply committed to young people, and marked by a generous spirit. At the same time, we recognised a need to return to simpler, foundational things: authentic friendship, intentional growth in faith, and a clearer focus on reaching out beyond our walls.

Out of that reflection has come a fresh vision we're excited about:

Building Faith,
Building Fellowship,
Building Bridges.

In everyday terms, that means we want to be a place where people can grow in their relationship with God, whatever their starting point; where we genuinely care for one another as family; and where we consistently reach out to connect with you - our neighbours. Whether through our services, our work in schools, children's and youth groups, pastoral care in times of need, baptisms, weddings and funerals and much more. Our aim is to be a church for the whole parish.

This isn't simply a plan for the already-committed. It's an open invitation to you. We can't build this future alone. We need your prayers, your insights and your presence. Perhaps you might join us for coffee, come to a service, attend a social event, or simply wonder whether there might be a place for you here?

We believe God is stirring something good among us, and we would love for you to be part of it.

With every blessing,

Rev. Andrew

A Curate's Life in Bowdon

I'm truly astonished at how quickly my first year as a curate has whizzed by. It feels as though I arrived only yesterday, yet the last 12 months have been both full and rewarding. From the very beginning, I've been welcomed so warmly, and I'm incredibly grateful to Reverend Andrew and to everyone across the parish who has supported me, encouraged me, and helped me feel at home. It has genuinely been a joy and a blessing to serve here.


Rev. Karen with Rev. Andrew after Karen's ordination in June (Photo: Chester Diocese)

One of the greatest highlights has been the relationships formed through the many varied services, groups, and activities I've had the privilege of leading or taking part in. The Christian Identity course last autumn was especially meaningful, offering space for people to explore and deepen their faith, followed by the wonderful confirmation service with Bishop Mark in November, where young people and adults stood side by side to affirm their commitment to Christ.

Advent and Christmas in Bowdon brought new joys, with several thousand school pupils celebrating in church, with standing room only at some of our own services. In early 2026, I helped to lead a Lent course as we journeyed towards Easter. These activities have played a part in shaping our new Small Groups, which offer a safe, supportive place for people to grow in faith and friendship.

Another profound privilege has been walking alongside families at key life moments, including baptisms, weddings, and funerals. It is an honour to be part of these significant life events. This year so far, I've had the joy of conducting 12 baptisms. Meeting families, talking about Jesus, exploring what baptism means, and then welcoming each child or adult into our church family and celebrating the renewing work of the Holy Spirit in baptism has been a real blessing.

A particularly special moment came in June, when I was ordained priest at St George's, Altrincham. I was overwhelmed by the number of people from Bowdon who came to support me on the day. It was wonderful to have so many of you there.

Thankfully, my curacy here still has another two years to go. I'm excited to continue discerning, praying about, and joining in with all that God is doing in our midst here in Bowdon.

Every blessing,

Rev. Karen

The Coffee Cabin – there for you all year round!

If you fancy getting your week off to a flying start, why not come along to the Coffee Cabin, which, apart from bank holidays, meets on a Monday morning at St Luke's Church on Vicarage Lane from 10.30 to 12 noon.

It is the ideal place to meet up with friends or even to make new ones. We serve tea or coffee (plus refills) and a toasted teacake or croissant for just £1.20, with a raffle ticket included.

Several times each year we also hold daytime social events. Our last event, held in early July, was boldly billed as "A Seaside Special." Sauntering into St Luke's to the strains of Cliff Richard's "Summer Holiday", Reverend Andrew, donning a dapper red and white striped blazer, did not disappoint. Special thanks must go to Dee Dee (Denise) Estephan for her most enchanting seaside display which certainly transported us to the coast. The event was rounded off with ice creams - 99s, of course - with no cheeky seagulls to spoil the day!

Hilary Gartside


(photo: Andrew Knight)

Join us for our Harvest lunch on Friday, 9 October. Tickets are available from judith@bowdonchurch.org or from the Parish Office. Everyone is most welcome.

Our Mission is "...to grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, to share these so effectively in our parish and beyond, that we may increase our worshipping community, our depth of faith, our joy in worship, and our pastoral care and outreach..."

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BOWDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL, A CHARITABLE BODY REGISTERED IN ENGLAND AND WALES WITH THE CHARITY COMMISSION—REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1133830; REGISTERED OFFICE ADDRESS: BOWDON PARISH CENTRE, STAMFORD ROAD, BOWDON, ALTRINCHAM, WA14 2TR.

Arrangements for Harvest 2026

The Harvest services, in which we express our gratitude to God for all he gives us during the year, will be held this year on 11 October: in St Mary's at 10am, where there will be a joint service with Zone 2, and in St Luke's at 11am.

Everyone is asked to bring their donations to St Mary's during the week preceding the Harvest service, from Monday 5 October to Friday 9 October, while the church is open during the day, and to leave them in designated pews.

This year's donations will go primarily to help families and individuals in Partington who are struggling financially, and also to residents in need here in our own parish of Bowdon.

If you are unable to bring your donations to church, please leave them in the yellow food bin to the left of the entrance to the Parish Centre. Items that will store with good shelf lives, for example tea, coffee, sugar, cereal, pasta and tinned goods, are most welcome.

Nearer the time we will be appealing to the classes at Bowdon Church School and in church for specific items to meet particular shortages.

Thank you!

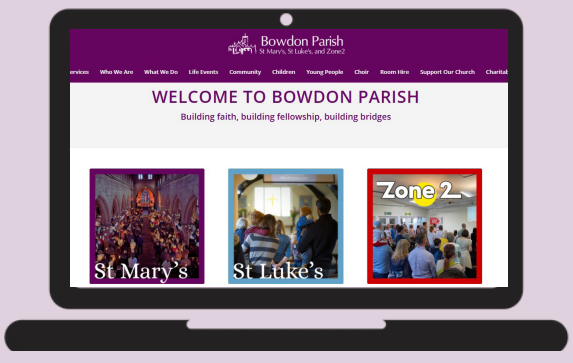
bowdonchurch.org

We have continued to refresh and update our website over the summer and it really is a great source of information and an excellent way to keep up to date with all our latest services and activities.

This is especially useful in the coming months, with so many special services including Harvest, our All Souls service, and Remembrance Sunday, not to mention everything that goes on in the run up to Christmas.

On the website you can also sign up for our weekly e-news. This is sent out on a Friday and gives details of what is going on that week, which is very helpful and saves asking AI!

There is always something going on in our Parish from First Steps to FOBCY working parties, so don't miss out!



Safeguarding in Bowdon Parish

Creating a church where everyone feels safe, valued and respected is a priority in Bowdon Parish. Safeguarding is at the heart of our life together, helping to ensure that children, young people, and vulnerable adults can participate confidently in our community.

Recent issues across the wider Church of England have highlighted significant failures in handling allegations of misconduct, leading to a crisis of trust nationally, which has underlined the importance of strong safeguarding standards and culture. Here in Bowdon Parish, our approach is built on openness, accountability, vigilance and care. Clergy, staff and volunteers receive regular training, follow clear procedures, safe recruitment practices and share a commitment to promoting the wellbeing of all.

We want everyone who comes into contact with our church to feel listened to, supported and treated with dignity and respect. By embedding safeguarding into every aspect of parish life, mission and ministry, we continue to demonstrate our commitment to nurture a welcoming and trusted community where everyone can flourish.

Clive Searle
(Parish Safeguarding Officer)

Financial Giving

It costs approximately £1,000 a day to run Bowdon Church, covering the cost of our diverse activities and ministries in Bowdon Parish, meeting the needs of our community and maintaining our historic buildings. This is wholly funded by the regular weekly giving of the congregation alongside charitable donations made by individuals and fees for some pastoral services. We are extremely grateful for all this support and every donation, however small is carefully invested.

If you feel able to help, with any amount, regular donations or one-off gifts can be made by approaching:

- The Parish Recorder, Kate Stross at parishrecorder@bowdonchurch.org
- Or via the Parish Office at admin@bowdonchurch.org
- Or scan the QR code for a one-off donation

Our Bank details are: Bowdon PCC / sort code 51 61 11 / account 05001455

Thank you.

Bowdon Parish Silver Eco Church

In March this year Bowdon Parish was granted the Silver Eco Church award by A Rocha UK. The scheme encourages churches across the UK to strive towards an environmental approach to all aspects of church life including worship, buildings, lifestyle choices, land management and community engagement.

Highlights of achieving Silver Eco Church have been citizen surveys in the churchyard, for example the 'Big Butterfly Count' and the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. Our 'Zone 2' youngsters enjoyed exploring our churchyard through the summer 'Outdoor Church' services and the Wrigglers Group through planting wild seeds. More recently, bike racks at the Parish Centre have been installed to encourage sustainable travel to our buildings. As part of our commitment as a Silver Eco Church, Bowdon Church is also supporting Tree Aid, a charity which works across Africa, planting trees that restore land, improve soil and water management and help communities to build sustainable livelihoods.

If you would like to join the Eco Team or let us know your ideas on how we can become a greener parish, please contact Rev. Andrew revandrew@bowdonchurch.org or Gabby Campbell gabbycampbell@bowdonchurch.org

Gabby Campbell


Fridah lives in Nairobi and benefits from the Beacon of Hope project (photo: Christian Aid)

Christian Aid Week 2026

Thank you so much to everyone who gave their time and money so generously to support our Christian Aid appeal in May. We raised a fantastic £7268.78. This year's donations will support the local NGO "Beacon of Hope" in Nairobi's impoverished settlements, to transform small city spaces into thriving farms, empowering women with the tools and training to fight climate change, feed their families, and build sustainable incomes.

Hilary Gartside

Learning the Ropes of Ringing


Rope making (photo: Karen Drury)

In July, we welcomed Year 6 pupils from the Bollin School to St Mary's to take part in a Bell Ringing Experience arranged by Mr Darling, their teacher and an experienced bellringer.

Over the morning, pupils had the opportunity to have a go at making bell rope, played handbells to learn about tune ringing and change ringing, and worked in pairs on a ropemaking craft to create keyrings and bracelets.

Of course, the highlight for most of the young people was climbing the tower where they had a go at ringing the church bells under the supervision of experienced bellringers!

It was a fantastic morning and wonderful to see the church such a hive of activity. Thanks to Andrew Darling and all the other bellringers from St Mary's and further afield, who made the event possible.

If you are interested in bellringing, please contact Graham Cook, our Tower Captain via the Parish Office admin@bowdonchurch.org.

Rev. Karen, Curate


(photo: Lucy and Dan Harrison-Croft/Ally M Photography

Weddings at St. Mary's Bowdon

We delight in holding wedding services for many couples each year in the glorious surroundings of St Mary's Church. It's a place steeped in centuries of tradition, yet services can have a very modern feel depending on the couple's wishes, with varied music, readings and prayers. Churches are special places and a church wedding offers so much for the big day and the couple, which you can't get anywhere else. If you live, or have ever lived, in the Parish of Bowdon you automatically qualify to be married in St. Mary's Church, else there are other ways you may already have or could make a 'qualifying connection'. To enquire contact Kay in the Parish Office, and Rev. Andrew or Rev. Karen will be in touch. Tel: 0161 929 1537 email: admin@bowdonchurch.org

What our wedding couples are saying:

"Rev. Andrew and the team were really friendly and welcoming. They were accommodating with any and all of our requests and helped create our perfect wedding. The church looked beautiful, the choir was amazing and leaving to the sound of the bells was very special". Lucy and Dan.

"From the very beginning when we enquired to be married at St Mary's we were met with such warmth and kindness and this continued right up to our banns readings, the rehearsal and the service itself. It was the most special service and all of our guests commented on the rousing hymns and heartfelt words. We couldn't be happier to have been married in such a special and meaningful place". Rachel and Nick.

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