



Vision

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Welcome to the first Stauros newsletter of 2026!

As we step into a new season, we are filled with gratitude for all that has been and anticipation for what lies ahead. This year, we're delighted and thankful to God to have reached the milestone moment of opening the doors of our new Centre. This will take place on Saturday 6th of June 2026. Whether you've been part of Stauros for years or are just joining us, you are welcome and we want you to know you are an important part of this journey. As you read this Newsletter, it is our hope that you will be inspired and encouraged to continue in your faithful support as we move forward together.

Thank you for being part of Stauros. Here's to a year of growth, hope, and shared purpose in Him.

Matter of the Heart

1 Samuel 16 v 7

"For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"

I have been challenged by this a lot recently. God doesn't look at our good works, or the fact that we serve Him, he looks at the condition of our heart. That is what matters to Him. The Bible talks about the heart a lot, but God is not talking about our physical heart, He is talking about the inward person. The heart that the Bible is referring to, is our thoughts, desires, emotions, will, and character. The heart is the real us, it's the part of us that people don't always see. We know that God sees the condition of our heart, and we can't hide it from him. That can cause a certain amount of anxiety, as it can be easy to put a mask on to the world, but to know that God can see the real us can be a bit scary.

So how do we examine our own hearts before the Lord? When I consider the question, "How is your heart?", I can be a bit confused, and if I'm honest the answer could change about 10 times a day, because there are times when I would say that my heart is good, and that I'm doing well at loving others, but there are times when I'm having a bad day, and I'm angry, maybe on a short fuse, my patience is low, and I'm really not doing so well.

I thought it might be helpful for us to look through scripture at some people, and examine their hearts to see if we can relate to any of them.

It says of the Pharisee and tax collector in Luke 18 v 10-14, "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and one a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people - robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his chest and said, 'God have mercy on me a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other went home justified before

God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

This story shows that God is not so interested in our good works, He cares more about the condition of our heart. So, when people say, "I'm a good person I don't hurt anyone, I give to charity, I look after the homeless, I live a relatively good life", this shows that actually, this is not enough. The tax collector couldn't boast of his good works, but his heart was humble and he recognised he was a sinner and in need of a Saviour.

King David was described as "a man after God's own heart", but he was far from perfect - he committed adultery and murdered. Confronted by the prophet Nathan, David immediately confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord". In Psalm 51 we can read David's full prayer of repentance to the Lord.

So how is your heart? Is it soft and repentant, does it have compassion on others, or is it hard and bitter? Do we pile stuff on others that we can't live up to ourselves? Are we as Jesus described the Pharisees - white washed tombs, lovely on the outside but rotten on the inside.

How do we guard our heart? Recognise our need of a Saviour. Immerse yourself in scripture and pray. Have boundaries in our lives. Be obedient to the Lord. Do our absolute best to turn our backs on sin, as nowhere in the Bible does Jesus condone sin. When we talk about repentance, we are not saying you can live how you want to, then repent and it will all be okay. There are consequences for our sin that we all deal with. Be careful of what we let into our lives and be careful of what influences our decisions.

Practice gratitude - thank God every day for the Gospel that has set us free, thank Jesus for what He has done for us. We really are so privileged. For we have been rescued, not only from our sin, but also, from a lost eternity.

Luke 12 v 34, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Bolton Stauros Meeting

My name is Paul Murphy and I am the full-time Stauros worker in Bolton, England. I work with many people both, in the community and the prison work that I do. My wife Lynne and I run a Stauros meeting every first and third Wednesday of the month at the Bridge Church in Bolton where we have attended for 34 years, and although it is not a large group, there is a steady number of between eight and ten people who attend regularly.

It is a group where love and respect are shown to all, and where everyone who attends cares for, and looks out for each other, and all are interactive within it. There is a friendly and warm welcome for all those who attend, and the emphasis of our group is based on the word of God and prayer, and supporting each other through life. It is great to see the changes in the people who attend, and journey with them on their own journeys with God, and to see the new friendships that are developed within the group. One of the things that helps people relax is that we are all from the same backgrounds of addiction, and that there is no such thing as a silly question, so there is no need for them to feel embarrassed about asking something, as we are like a family.

The group is open to anyone who wishes to come along and if anyone who lives in England wishes to attend then please feel free to come along and join with us, we would love to see you.

Testimony of God's Grace

Hi, my name is Sandy, and I am part of the Stauros meeting that is held in the Bridge Church in Bolton. My first contact with the Stauros Foundation was some eight or nine years ago when I was struggling with alcohol addiction. I started drinking at a young age as it enabled me to block out past hurts and troubles. I had a difficult childhood in a dysfunctional family down in the South of England and was sent to a boarding school there. Alcohol became a mainstay in my life as it gave me Dutch courage as many people would say, and although I recognised that I was drinking heavily, I never accepted that I had a problem.

I met and married my wife who was from Bolton and we settled there. We both had demanding jobs, myself as an accountant and my wife was a teacher. Alcohol helped me escape from the pressures of work, but also it blocked the past out. It began to affect my relationship with my wife, but I ignored it for many years, staying in denial. Eventually, I picked up the phone and contacted Paul Murphy, whose number a friend had given me. I was apprehensive initially, as I did not know what to expect from meeting with Paul, who sat with both me and my wife to discuss things. I accepted Paul's offer of help and support, and he began to see me on a weekly basis. Although I did attend a local church, I would not have had the relationship with God like the one I have now.

It was a long process, and I would at times have been heavily under the influence when Paul came to see me, but Paul amazingly didn't turn and walk off, he sat with great patience and showed compassion and love to both me and my wife, and when leaving would always pray with us, and for us, which on most occasions made my wife cry. Paul told us that he was there for the long haul, and he was true to his word, even taking time to come round to the house when my wife had found me on the floor upstairs, totally out of it and unable to stand.

Around 7 years ago, just before Christmas, I was taken into hospital because of one of my drinking bouts. They began to detox me, but also, they did some scans and tests which revealed that I had bowel cancer. They operated on me and had to remove the bowel and place it in a stoma bag, with the hope of replacing the bowel in a year's time. It was over three years before they reversed the bowel procedure. After this I was sober for quite some time, but I then decided to take a drink again, which put my marriage under considerable pressure with my wife not wanting me in the home. I wanted to stop drinking, but was afraid to stop, as I did not know what I would do without alcohol, or what would replace it.

Paul, though, true to his word, was like a bad penny showing up, but he was always respectful and supportive, and continued to reiterate the point that God was the one who would take care of me and bring about hope and change in my life. I have now been sober for a few years, and the reason is that I allowed God to take control rather than me be in control as I always messed up, whereas God never does.

My relationship with God is one that continues to bear fruit along with my relationship with my wife. We read the Word together, we pray together and we attend church together. We have had a few problems during this time like anyone else does, but have got through those problems unscathed because God is the mainstay in our lives. The Stauros meeting that we have in Bolton is great to attend. Paul always says that it is not about him, but all about God and that we are all equals there. We sit around and hear the word of God and then have a time of sharing about how it may have spoken to anyone personally and then have a time of prayer. It is great also in the fact that new friendships are developed and that we are all supportive of one another. A family is the best way to describe it. It is a place where compassion and love are shown and that anyone is welcomed with open arms. I really cannot thank the Lord enough for what he has done for us, and given us. A new life, a new beginning, and a purpose to life.

Update on the Building

We are on the home stretch of finishing our counselling and training centre here at Straidhavern, and as we reflect back, we realise just how far we've come. What began as a God-given vision slowly grew into a long, stretching, and often exhausting journey, filled with obstacles we never anticipated. Yet today, standing in this space, we can say with confidence that every step, every delay, every challenge, and every breakthrough has been marked by the faithfulness of God.

People will see the finished centre, the fresh walls, the peaceful rooms, the sense of welcome and safety that fills the space, but what they won't see is the struggle behind the scenes. They won't see the countless conversations about finances. They won't see the moments when progress slowed to a halt and discouragement crept in. They won't see the emotional weight of carrying a vision that felt way bigger than our resources, our strength, and sometimes even our faith.



Bedrooms

There were days when we questioned whether we had heard God correctly. Days when the vision felt too heavy, and giving up seemed easier than pressing on. However, even in the hardest moments, something kept us moving forward, a deep conviction that this centre matters, that it will change lives, that it will advance God's Kingdom, and that He had not brought us this far to leave us stranded.

If there is one theme that has defined this journey, it is this - God has been faithful in providing exactly what we needed, exactly when we needed it. Sometimes the provision came through unexpected financial gifts. Sometimes through people who volunteered their time, skills, or resources. Sometimes through discounts, donations, or opportunities that arrived at just the right moment. And sometimes, the provision was simply the strength to keep going through discouraging days. Looking back, it's impossible to deny His hand in every detail. What felt like delays in some situations was actually His protection. What has felt impossible, we hope someday, will become a place of testimony in many people's lives.

Now that the centre is almost complete, it carries far more than building work, furniture and décor. It carries the story of God's goodness. It carries the prayers spoken over it. It carries the hope that every person who walks through these doors will hear the Gospel and surrender their lives to the only one who can bring healing, forgiveness and peace to their souls - the Lord Jesus Christ.



Basement (with lights!)

This is not just a building. It is a place where people will find safety, compassion, and the support they need to heal and grow. It will be a place of restoration. A place of learning. A place where people will be equipped to support others in their most vulnerable moments, and a place where God's heart for wholeness will be lived out in real, practical ways.

Finishing this centre has reminded us that God doesn't always call us to easy things, He calls us to meaningful things. And meaningful things often require perseverance, sacrifice, and faith that stretches us beyond our comfort. But He also reminds us that we never walk alone.

The building may be almost finished, but the real work is only beginning. We are stepping into this new chapter believing that this centre will be a place where lives are changed, hope is restored, and people will encounter the kind of care that reflects God's love.



Classroom/Lounge



Retaining Wall on Perimeter

Stauros Meetings

Community support groups called Stauros meetings are held in:

- **Banbridge** on Alternate Thursday evenings at 7:30pm
Discipleship Bible study every Friday at 12:15pm
Contact *Woody Price* – 07824 485435
- **South Belfast** on Alternate Thursday evenings at 7:30pm
Contact *Ricky Wallace* - 07714 736630 or
Maggie Wallace - 07714 736619
- **West Belfast** every Tuesday morning 10:00am
Contact *Kim Cooper* - 07971 633978
- **Dromore, Co Down** on 2nd & 4th Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm
Contact *Cheryl Eagleson* – 07875 391824
- **Enniskillen** every Wednesday evening at 7:30pm
Contact *Brendan Jones* – 07798 660050
- **Lurgan** on Alternate Wednesday mornings at 9:30am
Contact *Pamela Brown* – 07824 485434
- **Nutts Corner, Crumlin** on Alternate Monday evenings at 7:30pm
Contact *Pamela Brown* – 07824 485434
- **Bolton, England** on Alternate Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm
Contact *Paul Murphy* – 07824 485437
- **Isle of Man** every Tuesday in **Ramsey** at 4pm and every Thursday in **Douglas** at 6:30pm - Contact *Gordon Buist* - 07624 453731



The Aims of the Stauros Foundation

1. To promote the gospel of Jesus Christ
2. To evangelise, help and offer fellowship to those suffering and recovering from addiction, to their families and to anyone else who feels they could benefit from our straightforward and practical approach
3. To educate society in general, and the Christian church in particular, about the dangers of all drugs used in a social or recreational way
4. To encourage a witness of abstinence from the social or recreational use of all drugs, including alcohol
5. To promote a society free from drug dependence

Stauros, with Gods help, seeks to befriend the individual and to identify the areas which keep him or her in bondage to their substance of choice.

Prayer Points

- We are so blessed with faithful donors but we ask that you pray with us that God will raise up a new generation of steadfast givers.
- Pray that we will continue to see people come to true faith in Christ, freedom from addiction and transformed in their daily lives.
- Pray for all involved in the ministry of Stauros, that in all things we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.
- Pray for the development of the program for the new centre as we seek the Lord to save souls, restore lives and encourage His people through training and fellowship.

Thank you

We are so conscious that firstly we need to keep the Lord at the centre of this ministry, but also, we need God's people to support us. We are so grateful for each and every one of you who pray for this ministry and also for those who are in a position to support us financially. Every donation really does help; therefore, please contact us if you are in a position to partner with us financially and we will help you set up a Standing Order.

Your prayers and support are not in vain. God continues to provide in ways that we could not imagine and we truly are overwhelmed by His goodness. God Bless you and keep you. "We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly". 1 Thessalonians 1:2

Want to know more? Please contact us:

Stauros Foundation, 29 Straidavern Road, Nutts Corner, Crumlin, BT29 4SN
Telephone: 028 9082 5058 Email: info@stauros.com

www.stauros.com

