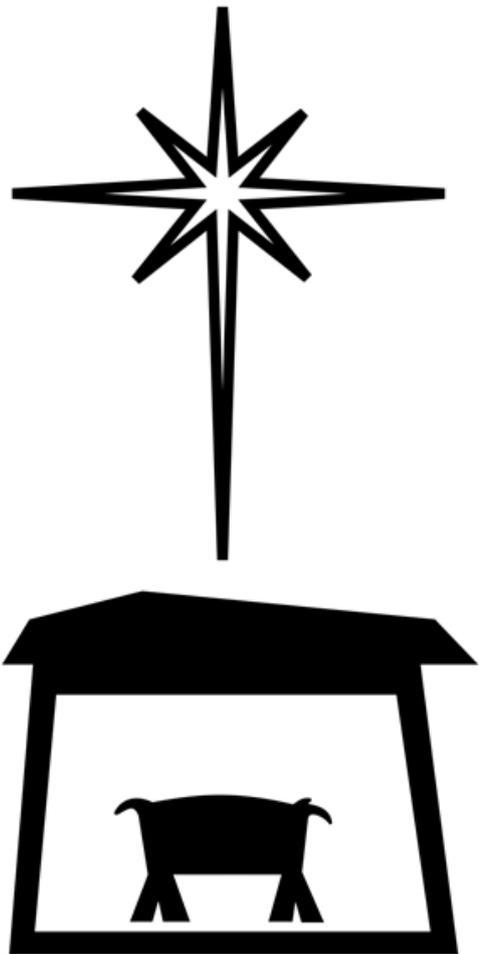


Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church

*Egerton Rd South, Chorlton-cum-Hardy,
Manchester*

December 2016 - January 2017



⁷⁸ By the tender mercy of our
God,
the dawn from on high will
break upon us,
⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in
darkness and in the shadow of
death,
to guide our feet into the way
of peace.'

Luke 1:78 – 79

"Benedictus" – the Song of Zechariah

Secretary

Kath Lacy

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From the Editor



Advent Hope in a “Post-Truth” World

Advent 2016 ends a year for which the OED’s new word is “post-truth”. Advent is traditionally the season of hope, but what hope is there for a “post-truth” world?

This year we witnessed two election campaigns where “truth” seemed to be in short supply at times. We were told not to bother trusting experts. The world seems to be increasingly dominated by fear, fuelled by politicians and the media for their own ends. This fear undermines trust between people, between nations, and it can be tempting to feel paralysed by it or to start to think tribally: to divide the world into “us” and “them”, to lose compassion for the “other” - whoever they might be. Why should we bother ourselves about the needs of others, when have our own problems?

In these cold and dark times it can be difficult to maintain the vision of hope we hear in Zechariah’s hymn (on the front cover). But our faith in Jesus gives us a *real* truth to hold on to: the assurance that the fears and terrors of this present age are not the final word. The season of Advent looks beyond the birth of a Messiah towards the eventual fulfilment of God’s Kingdom, but how do we embody that hope? Critic and philosopher Paul Goodman famously wrote, “Suppose you had the revolution you are talking and dreaming about. Suppose your side had won, and you had the kind of society that you wanted. How would you live, you personally, in that society? Start living that way now!”

Zechariah’s hymn shows us a way to embody Christian hope in a so-called “post-truth” world. It challenges us “to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death”, to live as if the Kingdom of God were among us - which, of course, it is - it arrived over 2000 years ago in Palestine, and it is here now, always.

Wishing you all every blessing in this Advent and Christmas season,

Mel

ADVENT TEA

On the afternoon of Advent Sunday it is an annual custom in our church to hold an **Advent Tea**, with activities including crafts, quizzes, fellowship time, carol singing, and then a bring-and-share tea. As you can see there was more than enough food to go round and plenty to take home afterwards!



It was a delight to welcome around 50 people to our afternoon events and tea yesterday and we are sincerely grateful to everyone who was involved in the preparations for the day, to The Mad Donnas who provided musical entertainment during the meal, and to everyone who helped with the clearing up afterwards. Thank you to Walt for taking photographs and posting them on the church website.



News Round up

Family News

Kath Lacy spoke to **Catherine Clegg** recently. Catherine slipped off the bottom step of her stairs and cracked several ribs. After previous falls, her sons had organised an alarm necklace for her so she was able to summon help. (Help arrived within 10 minutes). Catherine is house bound at the moment as her ribs are very painful. She would welcome a phone call (let the phone ring because it takes a while to reach it!) or a visit. Again ring in advance. One son lives in France, one in Wolverhampton and the third, Martin, lives in Radcliffe. Martin has given her a lot of support. Joyce Henry has visited Catherine and plans to go again soon.

Jean Bardsley is delighted to announce that her daughter Fiona had a baby daughter on Sunday 27th November. Isabella Grace weighed almost 7lbs and is a sister for Jonathan who is now 3 1/2 years old. Mother and baby are doing well.

Lee Gellatley is enjoying her placement at Levenshulme Inspire. She works with the Rev Andy Hall who has 25% ministry there, Liz Kam the CRCW and Ed Cox who is a non-stipendiary Minister.

In memory of **Audrey Morgan**, the Morgan family made a generous monetary donation to support the excellent work of the Metropolitan congregation's food bank. This gift from the family will make a real difference to the lives of people who struggle to put a meal on the table from one day to the next and for whom the hand of practical friendship means so much when they need it the most.

Sue Posada will be spending Christmas in Colombia with Mario, who is now living and working there. We wish Sue a safe journey and a pleasant stay. Please remember Sue and Mario and their family in your prayers.

Asylum Seekers Update

The Metropolitan Congregation's ministry with asylum seekers began in 2004. Since then, more asylum seekers have come and become involved in the life of the church, where they can. In some cases the church has been heavily involved in their campaigns, in other cases asylum seekers have simply given them the space to be themselves in a safe, supportive and loving environment. Philip Jones gave this report to the Elders' meeting on 28 November:

Andia Ngufor discovered last Friday that she has been granted asylum. She is now in that two-week period within which the Home Office could appeal the decision, but we have every reason to be hopeful that she will get her refugee status in the next few weeks.

Roland Kom and **Patrice Songmo** had their appeal hearings on Monday 28th November. They were told by the judge that they should hear the outcome of their appeals by mid to late January.

Albert Osagie is due to have his appeal hearing on Friday 2nd Dec.

Anne Simo was scheduled to have her asylum interview in Liverpool on 29th Nov.

The lawyer for **Jimmy Kyesswa** has been given funding to proceed with a Judicial Review of his case. We are hoping that, once this is under way, Jimmy can be given bail and will be released from Immigration Detention.

The afternoon congregation consider this work to be part of their faith; the work with asylum seekers is as much a part of the work for the coming of the Kingdom as are their own personal devotions, their own prayers, their own praise and their own worship in church. It is also inspiring to see the asylum seekers and those with refugee status blossom and bring their own gifts to the church and community.

Dates & Rotas

Sun Dec 4	Rev Dr Jack McKelvey Communion
Sun Dec 11	Gift Day Service Worship Group (Money gifts for Wood St Mission please)
Sun Dec 18	Carol Service: Elders & Congregation Followed by faith lunch & Church Meeting 1.45
Wed Dec 24	Christmas Eve Communion Service 11.30 pm Rev Valerie Davies
Sun Jan 1	Rev Raj Patta
Sun Jan 8	Rev Sue Rowe
Sun Jan 15	Walt Johnson
Sun Jan 22	Worship Group
Sun Jan 29	United Service at Chorlton Methodist Church

The church is open every Thursday morning 10.00am – 12.00pm, offering quiet space for prayer and reflection.

CAROL SERVICE AND CHURCH MEETING SUNDAY 18th DECEMBER

The Carol Service on Sunday 18th December will be followed by a faith lunch.

The Church Meeting starts at 1.45.

Please make every effort to attend

Readers & Readings

Taken from “Roots: Worship and Learning Resources for the Whole Church”

Dec 4	Melanie Hall	<i>Isaiah 11.1-9; Psalm 72.1-7,18-19; Romans 15.4-13; Matthew 3.1-12</i>
Dec 11	Brenda Beckett	<i>Luke 1:46 - 55 (Magnificat);</i>
Dec 18	Alastair Lyall	<i>Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7,17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25</i>
Dec 24	Chris Burton	<i>Luke 2:1-14 (15-20); Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11 -14</i>
Jan 1	Kevin Meade	<i>Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7,10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12</i>
Jan 8	Joyce Henry	<i>Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:11-17</i>
Jan 15	Ella Burton	<i>Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42</i>
Jan 22	Barbara Williams	<i>Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1,4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23</i>
Jan 25 ⁹	At Chorlton Methodist	<i>Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12</i>

**** Some readings differ from those in the URC Prayer Handbooks 2016/7**

Please check readings with the preacher in good time before the service

Advent / Christmas Events

The **Gift Day Service** will be held on 11th December and will be led by the Worship Group. The theme is “The World Turned Upside Down” and we will be looking at the way the birth of Jesus turned the expected order of things completely upside down and what it might mean for us today.



Please bring gifts of **money** for the Wood Street Mission.

As usual we are sharing a **Christmas Eve Midnight Service** starting at 11.30pm, with our friends from Metropolitan Church and those from other local churches who wish to come. This service is a welcome pause in the Christmas rush: a time to stop and remember what Christmas is really about as we celebrate the coming of Christ among us. Rev Valerie Davies will lead this Communion service. There will be a collection for the Booth St Centre.

There is no service on Christmas Day at Wilbraham St Ninians; Central URC has a service at 10.45 am led by Rev Sarah Brewerton.

It only remains for the Editor and the Elders to wish all our readers and friends a **Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.**