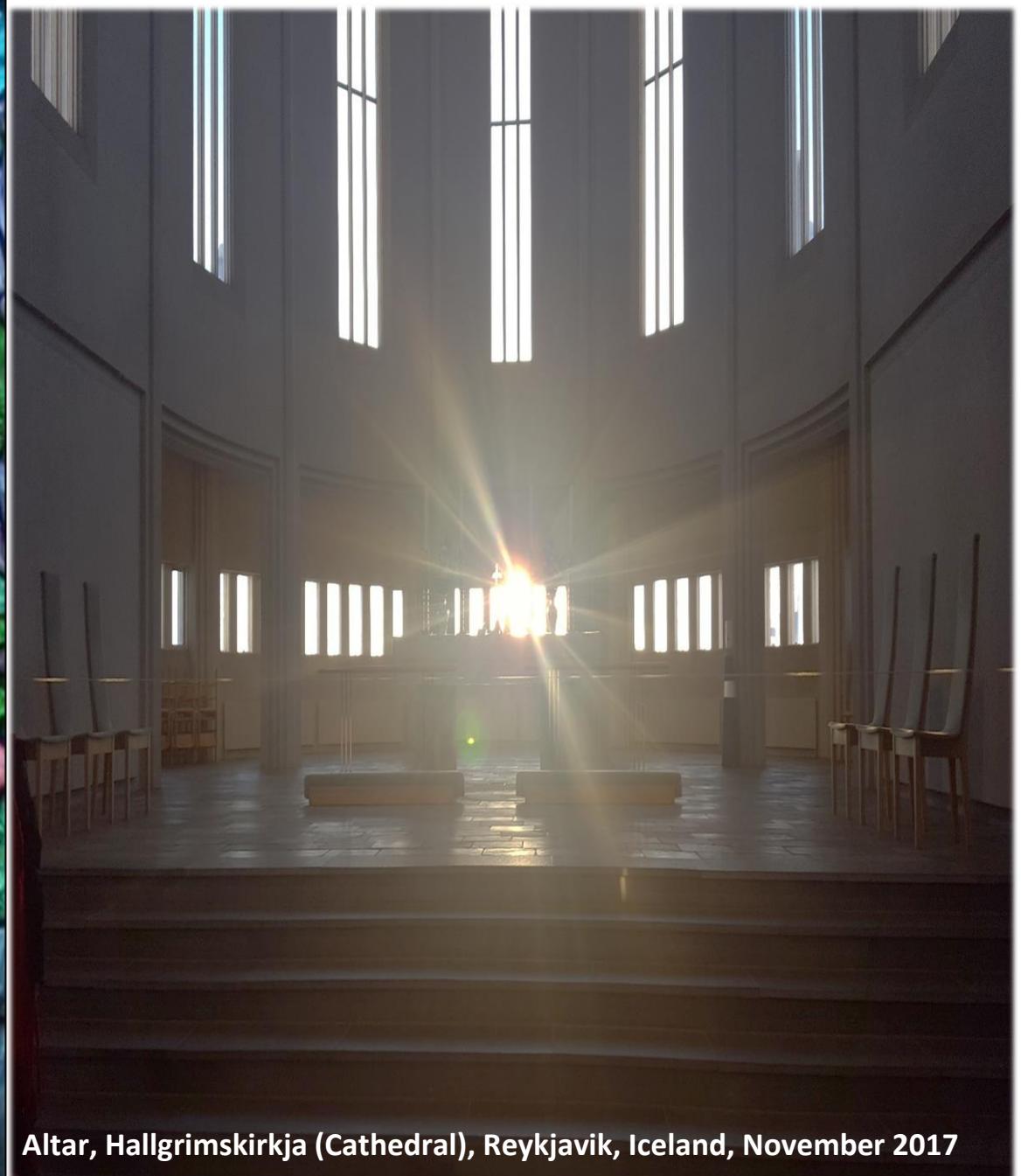




Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church Newsletter

June 2021



Altar, Hallgrímskirkja (Cathedral), Reykjavik, Iceland, November 2017

**I was glad when they said to me,
‘Let us go to the house of the
Lord!’**

(Psalm 122, V1)



From the Editor..... June 2021

What does ‘Church’ mean to you?

As we look forward to the possibility of meeting for worship in church once more, many of have been asked to reflect on the questions ‘What is church?’ and ‘What is ‘church’ for?’ There has been much talk, in particular, about how far we can and should be ‘church’ without a building in which to meet in person and in a world where people increasingly ‘meet’ online in various ways. And I have to acknowledge that meeting online offers opportunities that in-person events can’t offer, like the chance to meet and study with people from all over the regions, the country and even from abroad -all in the comfort of your own home.

The meaning of ‘church’ in the New Testament is a group of people drawn together because of their commitment to follow Jesus. The early church people met to pray, learn, discuss their faith, support one another and remember Jesus’ sacrifice through communion (bread and wine). Acts 2:42 says that Jesus’ followers “devoted themselves to teaching and fellowship” and Acts 2:46 says they “spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and are their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people”. It strikes me that, during lockdown, we have been like these early church folk, even though much of our activity has been digital (Zoom worship, meetings, Bible study) or distanced (Space at the Table meals).

But the one thing we have missed is “spending time together in the Temple’ (our church building) and ‘the breaking of bread’ (in the sense of Communion). Whatever people say about digital services, drinking juice and nibbling a cracker while sitting alone at a computer screen is NOT the same experience as taking Communion in our church building with members of our church fellowship!

Yes, ‘the church is wherever God’s people are praising’ (R&S 583), but let’s give thanks for our building, for all the memories it holds of dear friends and loved ones, baptisms, marriages, funerals, beloved preachers and the special services it has been such a privilege to be part of; for all the communities for whom our building provides a home, and especially for our beautiful, special worship space that allows us to meet together in fellowship and friendship in the presence of God

Every Blessing,

Mel

A prayer for re-opening

We are not people of fear: we are people of courage.

We are not people who protect our own safety:

we are people who protect our neighbours’ safety.

We are not people of greed: we are people of generosity.

We are your people God, giving and loving,

wherever we are, whatever it costs

For as long as it takes wherever you call us.

Amen

Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference



THE BIBLE AND SEXUALITY

A SERIES OF BIBLE STUDIES EXPLORING SEXUALITY

Tuesdays: 8th June 7pm – 8pm
 22nd June 7pm -pm

Zoom Meeting ID – 879 8348 7389

Family News

We are pleased to report that **Sid Beckett** has come home from hospital. We send every good wish to Sid and Brenda for Sid's continued recovery.

The Burton family enjoyed a short holiday in a cottage near Harlech in North Wales. They visited the beach several times and Chris and Adam enjoyed exploring the ramparts of the castle. Here is the view from the cottage, as you can see the only neighbours were the sheep! (*Photo Ella Burton, 2021*)



Susan Parry is in hospital, having a stem cell transplant. She is in good spirits and is very grateful for everyone's prayers and support.

Philip Jones was invited to be a speaker along with Gorton MP Afzal Khan at the relaunch of the Manchester 'These Walls Must Fall' campaign relaunch led by Magdalena Moyo, a member of the Afternoon congregation.

Church News

Thanks to the generosity of the kind people of Wilbraham St Ninian's and the Metropolitan Congregation who met people's travel expenses, a Covid vaccination clinic was organised at Whalley Range cricket club for our LGBT Asylum seekers on Tuesday 25th May. **Bethan Galliers** from Levenshulme Inspire organised the clinic, and **Philip Jones** from the Metropolitan Congregation organised and helped people get to and from the clinic.

The Elders have agreed to have a phased opening up of church starting on Sunday 4th July (national and local rules permitting). Elders and Managers are producing an up-to-date Risk Assessment so that we will be all set to go.

We will need your help to supervise Covid safety procedures, e.g., taking details for Track and Trace, helping with hand sanitiser and explaining Covid safety measures.

You will be contacted soon to ask you to complete a short questionnaire to help us to move forward with our plans.

We anticipate that when we first meet, we will have a short period of worship followed by a small socially-distanced celebration. A Communion service will follow soon after.

If you have missed a celebration during the lockdown period (e.g., wedding anniversary, significant birthday, please let me or Kath know so that we can celebrate your 'occasion' at the re-opening service).



Dates for Your Diary (online until further notice)

Tuesday 1 st June 7pm Zoom meeting ID: 845 4273 0681 Passcode: 412972	Book Club: 'Dazzling Darkness' by Rachel Mann, 'Specks and Planks' by Jeff Lucas
Tuesday 8 th June 7pm – 8pm	Bible Study 'The Bible and Sexuality' Zoom Meeting ID - 879-8348 7389
Wednesday 9 th June 7.30pm Mission Mentor Workshop	Pulpit Supply Vacancies Discussion with Dave Fraser
Saturday 12 th June 10.30am – 12.30pm	Eco Church Workshop led by Daleen Ten Cate. Email Daleen.TenCate@nwsynod.org.uk
Monday 14 th June 7.30pm	<i>Elders' Meeting (if required)</i>
Sunday 20th June 2pm	Church Meeting
Tuesday 22 nd June 7pm – 8pm	Bible Study 'The Bible and Sexuality' Zoom Meeting ID - 879-8348 7389
Wednesday 30 th June Mission Mentor Workshop	What do we need / want from a new Mission Mentor (informal session)
Sunday 4th July 10.45am	Proposed church re-opening Service + celebration

Lectionary Bible Readings for this month

Taken from “Roots on the Web” Lectionary Year B

May 30 th Trinity Sunday	<i>Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17</i>
June 6 th Proper 5	<i>Genesis 3:8-15; Psalm 130; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5.1; Mark 3:20-35</i>
June 13 th Proper 6	<i>Ezekiel 17:22-24; Psalm 92:1-4,12-15; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10(11-13)14-17; Mark 4:26-34</i>
June 20 th Proper 7	<i>Job 38:1-11; Psalm 107:1-3,23-32; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41</i>
June 27 th Proper 8	<i>Wisdom of Solomon 1:13-15; 2:23-24; Lamentations 3:22-33; Psalm 30; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 5:21-43</i>
July 4 th	<i>Ezekiel 2:1-5; Psalm 123; 2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13</i>

CHURCH MEETING:

Sunday 20th June at 2pm

The Church Meeting will discuss the proposed re-opening of the church building for worship on Sunday 4th July.
You will be sent a short questionnaire about what kind of worship you would like, as things will not be back as they were before the pandemic struck.

Zoom details will be emailed before the event – please make every effort to attend if you can

Thank-You's for Your Generosity



We received a letter from the URC Finance Committee thanking congregations for their generosity in continuing to support the URC's Ministry and Mission (M&M) fund. Our enabled the URC to meet the full costs of its Ministries, Education & Learning, Children's and Youth Work and Mission departments in 2020, as well as covering amounts spent on safeguarding, denominational governance and communications. **"...this past year has been phenomenal. Thank you to those of you who have been able to maintain or increase financial support for your church congregation through this difficult time. Thank you!"**

Full text of the letter is available on the stewardship page of the URC website <http://www.urc.org.uk/stewardship.html>)



A big 'thank you' to everyone who has given life-changing gifts to Christian Aid's recent appeals.

'Give Thanks for the Vaccine Appeal': Your gifts help Christian Aid to provide practical support and to campaign for coronavirus vaccines to be made available to the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities and not monopolised by the global North.

Christian Aid Week: Your gifts support communities to access a reliable source of water, helping to provide a stable income and keep families healthy. Florence, from Kitui, Kenya, was struggling to feed her family with no water to grow crops, and a dangerous journey to collect water. Now, the local dam allows Florence to grow tomatoes, papayas, onions and chillies, and she keeps bees and sells the honey at the market. Florence says, 'I am happy...I have strength and power'.