

Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church

*Egerton Rd South, Chorlton-cum-Hardy,
Manchester, M21 0XJ*

April 2017



How beautiful is the blossom

spilling from the tree,

the hidden primrose

and the bluebell

ringing out the news.

He is risen

he is alive

we shall live

for evermore.

*"Easter Blessing" Kate Mclhagga from "The
Green Heart of the Snowdrop" © WGRG*

Interim Minister

Rev Alan Poolton

Secretary

Kath Lacy

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From the Editor..... April 2017

A Reflection from Taizé on Judas and Forgiveness

Among the many disciples who followed him, Jesus designated twelve to be closest to him, to share and continue his mission. But at a certain moment, Jesus realised that one of the twelve, Judas, had changed. Jesus understood that Judas was becoming distant from him, and even saw that he was going to “hand him over,” as the gospels put it. According to John’s gospel, Jesus understood what was happening already in Galilee, long before the events in Jerusalem that would bring him to the cross (John 6:70-71). Why then did he not send Judas away? Why did he keep him close to him until the end?

Because Jesus chose the twelve just as God chose his people, he could not send Judas away even when he realised that he was going to betray him. He knew that he had to love him to the end, to show that God’s choice was irrevocable. The prophets, Hosea and Jeremiah in particular, spoke in the name of a God wounded and humiliated by the betrayals of his people, but who nevertheless never stopped loving them with eternity’s love. Jesus could not do any less: humiliated by the treason of one of his closest companions, he kept on showing him his love. And it was particularly with Judas that he shared a piece of bread, a fragment of burning love that the disciple took away with him into his night (John 13:21-30).

If he wanted to be faithful to his Father, Jesus could do nothing else but keep Judas close to him until the end. He loved Judas even when Judas was enshrouded by darkness. The gospel says that Jesus “was glorified” at the moment he gave his love to Judas, when he loved him without gaining anything by it and beyond all measure (John 13:31). In the darkest night of resentment and hatred, Jesus manifested the unbelievable radiance of God’s love.

LENT GIFT DAY April 9 2017



The Church Meeting agreed to Joyce Henry's suggestion that the Gift Day appeal in 2017 should be for Laughter Africa, a charity helping street children in Sierra Leone. Laughter Africa's website shows children of all ages with big smiles on their faces – children who used to live a dangerous life on the streets of Sierra Leone until they met James Tyrrell and his volunteers. James is a member of a Christian group, the ARC Renewal Community, based in the Warrington area. After five and a half years with CAFOD working with street children in South Africa, he decided in 2015 to move to Sierra Leone and set up his own charity for street children.

James and his helpers go out in the streets every day and night to get to know the children and gain their trust. They also take a mobile unit every weekday afternoon to the community centre at Susan's Bay where large groups of children gather. They offer food and water, medical care, and a chance to rest and relax and enjoy fun and games with other children in a safe environment.

Laughter Africa have their own larger base called the Interim Care Centre, where they offer more services, such as counselling and workshops, a place to sleep, more medical care, and activities like sport, music and dance.

The charity aims to reunite children with their families if possible, but where family circumstances caused the child to go on the streets in the first place, they try to find them safe alternative homes. The volunteers keep in touch with all these children when they have left the streets. They also help with the cost of school fees or the cost of vocational training if needed, to give young people the chance of a secure future.

The Gift Day will be Palm Sunday – 9 April

Envelopes are available for your donation and will be collected at the services on 9 April. Taxpayers, please Gift Aid your donation!

(Thanks to Joyce and George for this article)

News Round up

Family News

It was lovely to see **Susannah Mkandawire** and **Rolland** in church on Sunday 19th March. Rolland has grown considerably, is loving school and he is looking forward to visiting his grandparents in Malawi in August. Rolland also gave Kath a very detailed account of his visit to Jodrell Bank with his school!

Pat Anstis was delighted with the success of the 'Big Brew' Fair Trade Coffee morning. £128 pounds of Traidcraft goods were sold on the day and £132 was raised on the coffee morning itself. Pat extends her thanks to everyone who helped or supported the event.

We have recently learned that **Ruth Dillon** has been diagnosed as suffering from retinitis pigmentosa, a condition which leads eventually to the loss of sight. Our thoughts and prayers are with Ruth as she comes to terms with this condition.

A Landmark Church Meeting

Our recent Church Meeting was a landmark meeting as, after prayer and reflection, the meeting resolved by a large majority to give its consent to our church being registered for same-sex marriages in parallel with its continuing registration for opposite-sex marriages. This decision came after months of careful consideration and prayer, and we are grateful to the Elders and Church Meeting organisers for the sensitive way in which the meeting was conducted and the decision reached. Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting and voted; there was a good representation of Church members from both congregations. The relevant resolutions from the Church Meeting will now go to the Trustees of the building (the Synod Trust) for the registration to be progressed.

Asylum Seekers Update

We were delighted to hear that Robert Kityo of the afternoon congregation received formal notification that his asylum claim has been granted. However, two members of the Afternoon Congregation, Cyprain Buh Tah and Abbey Kyeyune, remain in detention and continue to be at risk of deportation. Your continuing prayers are asked for their release from detention and a just outcome to their asylum cases.

WAR GEN

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO LIVED THROUGH

WORLD WAR 2 ?

Millions of men and women served and lived through WW2, but sadly now only a handful survive. World War II touched the lives of every man, woman and child in all the major combatant nations and yet soon the memories of those people will be gone forever.

The WarGen project, fronted by television presenters **Dan Snow** and **James Holland**, aims to record the memories of as many of these survivors as possible. They remain crucially important witnesses to the most cataclysmic war the world has ever known. If you have a relative or friend that is willing to be interviewed and recorded, please get in touch with the WarGen volunteer below for further information.



Your local contact:

Michael Thompson, Hardy Productions UK
44 Hardy Lane, Manchester M21 7LA
Tel: 07768 890044 Email: hardyprods@gmail.com

wargen.org

Dates & Rotas

March 30	Open Church: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm. Quiet space for prayer & reflection
April 2	Worship Group led by Chris Burton
April 6	Open Church: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm. Quiet space for prayer & reflection
April 9	Palm Sunday & Lent Gift Day (see back page) Rev Alan Poolton
April 13	Open Church: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm. Quiet space for prayer & reflection
April 13	Maundy Thursday Seder Meal & short service led by Walt Johnson 7.00pm New Hall
April 14	Good Friday 3pm A service of quiet reflection at the foot of the cross
April 16	Easter Sunday Rev Fleur Houston Joint Service with Afternoon Congregation
March 21	Open Church: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm. Quiet space for prayer & reflection
April 23	Rev Andy Braunston
April 28	Open Church: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm. Quiet space for prayer & reflection
April 30	Rev Dr Walter Houston Joint Service with the Methodists at Wilbraham St Ninians
May 7	Rev Raj Patta

Readers & Readings

Taken from "Roots on the Web" 2016 Revised Common Lectionary Year A

March 26	Ella Burton	<i>1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41</i>
April 2	Brenda Beckett	<i>Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45</i>
April 9	George Morton	<i>Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Matthew 21:1-11; Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14-27.66; Matthew 27:11-54</i>
April 16	Barbara Williams	<i>Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118.1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4; Matthew 28:1-10</i>
April 23	Kath Lacy	<i>Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31</i>
April 30	Sue Posada	<i>Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35</i>
May 7	Sian Richards	<i>Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10</i>

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

Thank you to Kath Lacy for producing the Readers' Rota.

**CHURCH GARDENING
MORNING:**

**SAT. 8TH APRIL
10.00AM - 12.00 NOON**

HELP NEEDED!!



Holy Week and Easter Events

Maundy Thursday Seder Meal takes place on Maundy Thursday, April 13th, at 7:00pm in the New Hall. This meal recalls the Jewish Passover and the Last Supper and incorporates a short Communion service. There is no charge but please sign the sheet at the back of the church so that the organisers can cater for the right number of people.

Good Friday Service: a service of quiet contemplation at the foot of the cross on Good Friday, April 14th, at Wilbraham St Ninian's at 3pm.

Easter Sunday: The 11.45 service on Easter Sunday, April 16th, will be a joint Communion service for both congregations and will be led by Rev Fleur Houston.

Manchester Passion: A cast of local people supported by the Manchester Inspirational Voices Choir (Songs of Praise Choir of the Year 2016!) and the Sweet Rhythm Big Band will present the story of Jesus' teachings, his betrayal, his trial and his Passion as he moves towards his death and Glorious Resurrection. Please take your place in Manchester Cathedral Gardens from noon, ready for a 2pm start

The Centre for Theology and Justice will be launched on Wednesday 10 May 2017 with the inaugural David Goodbourn Lecture: "Is justice enough? A radical Christian response to the current humanitarian and ecological crisis". This will be presented by Father Augusto Zampini, an Argentine Roman Catholic priest, currently the theological adviser to the UK aid-development agency CAFOD and an Honorary Fellow at Durham University, Roehampton University and Stellenbosch University (South Africa). David Walker, Bishop of Manchester, will chair the event. The launch takes place at **Luther King House, Rusholme, Manchester M14 5JP**. The afternoon begins with a light afternoon tea and refreshments from **3.45pm**. Augusto Zampini's lecture will start at 4.30pm and finish at approximately 6pm. It is a free but ticketed event, with tickets available until Sunday 30th April 2017 from EventBrite online at

<http://www.theologyjustice.org/launch/>