

# Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church

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

*November 2017*



In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place;  
and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns  
below.

*In Flanders Fields*  
*John McCrae 1872 - 1918*

Interim Minister  
Rev Alan Poolton

Secretary  
Kath Lacy  
0161 860 4717

From the Editor..... November 2017

## In Flanders Fields



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You may have seen a news story about the words from the poem on the front page, which have been written in poppies in various locations, including Salford Quays. It's one of the most famous poems of the Great War, and it's one of the main reasons that the poppy was adopted as the Flower of Remembrance for the war dead of Britain, France, the USA, Canada and other Commonwealth countries. But how much do you know about the man who wrote it?

John McCrae was born in Guelph, Ontario, on November 30, 1872. He was described as a man of high principles and strong spiritual values, warm and sensitive with a remarkable compassion for people and animals. He began writing poetry as a student. In 1898, he gained his medical degree, and the gold medal, from the University of Toronto. In 1902, he was appointed resident pathologist at Montréal General Hospital, eventually running his own practice, while lecturing and writing extensively. McCrae was a respected teacher and doctor, due to his enthusiasm and sense of responsibility to his patients, students and colleagues. He attended Sunday morning services at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Montréal and continued to write poetry.

On August 4, 1914, Britain declared war on Germany. John McCrae was among the 45,000 Canadians who joined up within three weeks. He took with him a horse named Bonfire, a gift from a friend. In the midst of the fighting, McCrae would send his young nieces and nephews letters supposedly written by Bonfire and signed with a hoof print.

In April 1915, John McCrae was in the trenches near Ypres, Belgium, in the area called Flanders. Surrounded by the dead and the dying, McCrae tended hundreds of wounded soldiers every day. The day before he wrote his poem, one of his closest friends was killed in the fighting and buried in a makeshift grave with a simple wooden cross. Wild poppies were already beginning to bloom between the crosses marking the many graves. Unable to help his friend or any of the others who had died, John McCrae gave them a voice through his poem.

During the summer of 1917, McCrae suffered severe asthma attacks and bouts of bronchitis, becoming more and more ill. On January 28 1918 he died of pneumonia and meningitis and was buried with full military honours in Wimereux Cemetery. Bonfire led the procession, with McCrae's riding boots reversed in the stirrups.

Before he died, John McCrae had the satisfaction of knowing that his poem had been a success. Soon after its publication, it became the most popular poem on the First World War. The symbolic poppy and John McCrae's poem are still linked today, and the voices of those who have died in war continue to be heard each Remembrance Day:

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders Fields.*

# News Round up

## Family News

First there is some sad news about old friends.

**Yvonne Tomes** died on 13 October at Airedale Hospital, Steeton, West Yorkshire aged 89 years. Your editor remembers Yvonne as a very persuasive Christian Aid co-ordinator and friend of the young people, as a faithful and creative member of our congregation and loving wife and champion of Roger and his work. Yvonne's funeral will be taken by Rev Tony Burnham and will be held at Wilbraham St Ninian's on **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November at 12.15**. We send our love and prayers to Chris, Helen and Martin and their families.

Your editor is saddened to report the death of the lovely **May Branney**, who died peacefully in her sleep on Friday /Saturday 28th October at the grand old age of 91. There will be a funeral in Chorlton but no date has been fixed as yet as a post mortem is required. Our condolences and prayers go to May's family.

Maggie McAllister left a message for Kath to say that her mother, **Marjorie Burton**, was very poorly in hospital. Marjorie was initially admitted to MRI with a chest infection but is now too frail to return to her nursing home. After moving wards several times she is now having comfort care in Manchester Ward. Maggie asks us to remember her Mum in our prayers.

Our dear friend **Rev Dr Jack McKelvey** sends his thanks for our prayers and cards and says he is improving after his stroke, thanks to frequent visits from the physiotherapist. After recently reaching the age of 88, Jack has decided to retire. He tells us that he is thankful for his 60 years "in the pulpit" and will miss preparing and leading services, but is finding that leading public worship is becoming more

of a strain. We too are thankful for Jack's many years of ministry and service and we will miss his insightful and always challenging preaching. We wish Jack a long and happy retirement.

**Rev Raj Patta** has accepted a call to the Methodist Circuit. His Welcome Service at St. John's Methodist Church at 6pm on Sunday 29th October was an uplifting occasion. A full church saw a strong URC representation, local Methodists and a large group of Raj's family and friends. We wish Raj every blessing in this new phase of his ministry.

## Church News

Many thanks to the "Big Team" who worked so hard inside the church and in the garden on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October. You accomplished a great deal, and we are grateful to you all.

The recent Elders' Meeting welcomed our new "Mission Mentor", **Dave Fraser**, who introduced himself and spoke about how he sees his role within the proposed "Missional Partnerships". Dave has lived in Broughton for the last 18 years with his wife Jen, a Special-care baby nurse, and their children, Stuart and Amy. With a background in Community development, Dave was a Special Category Minister in Salford for a while and now runs a social enterprise developing and supporting community projects.

Dave explained that Mission mentors are **not** here to tell churches what to do, or to do more, but to support existing workers within their churches. He gave some examples of things he has done for churches, which include leading workshops, sharing worship resources, running "away days" for tired Elders and helping set up a "bacon butty service" at a church in Marple. Key words are **BESPOKE** and **TARGETED**, so please start thinking about what Dave could do to support us. We invited him to the Advent Tea so come and meet Dave then and ask him about himself and his role.

## Dates & Rotas

Oct 29	United Service with the Methodists at Chorlton Methodist Church
Nov 2	Open Church: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm. Quiet space for prayer & reflection
Nov 5	Rev Alan Poolton
Nov 9	Open Church: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm. Quiet space for prayer & reflection
Nov 12	Rev Dr Tony Burnham <b>Remembrance Day Service</b>
Nov 16	Open Church: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm. Quiet space for prayer & reflection
Nov 19	Rev Sue Rowe Commitment for Life
Nov 23	Open Church: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm. Quiet space for prayer & reflection
Nov 26	Dr Adrian Curtis <b>Christ the King</b>
Nov 26	Advent Tea 2.45pm-ish – 5.30pm
Nov 30	Open Church: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm Quiet space for prayer & reflection
Dec 3 <b>Advent 1</b>	Rev Fleur Houston <b>Communion</b>

# Readers & Readings

From "Roots on the Web" 2017 Revised Common Lectionary Year A

Nov 5	Brenda Beckett	<i>Micah 3:5-12; Psalm 43; 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13; Matthew 23:1-12</i>
Nov 12	George Morton	<i>Amos 5:18-24; Psalm 70; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13</i>
Nov 19	Barbara Williams	<i>Zephaniah 1:7,12-18; Psalm 90:1-8,(9-11), 12; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30</i>
Nov 26	Kath Lacy	<i>Ezekiel 34:11-16,20-24; Psalm 95:1-7a; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46</i>
Dec 3 Advent 1	Sue Posada	<i>Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80.1-7,17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37</i>

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

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**Less than a month to go...!**



Welcome the season of Advent with friends from both congregations

Please put **26 November** in your diaries for the traditional Wilbraham St Ninian's **pre-Advent Tea**. Featuring crafts, carol singing, songs from the MadDonnas and Kevin's fiendish quiz, as well as a bring-and-share tea.

## **Commitment for Life 2017**

Commitment for Life is the world development programme of the United Reformed Church. In 2017, we remember 25 years of seeking justice.



Participating churches are encouraged to take action, pray and give for people across the world but especially in the four partner countries/region of Bangladesh, Central America (Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador), Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, and Zimbabwe. Commitment for Life works in partnership with Christian Aid and Global Justice Now.

Commitment for Life takes seriously the words of Jesus to love our neighbour, by reaching out to those who most need solidarity and prayer. It has raised around half a million a year at its peak and educated and enabled Churches to respond to the call to action as part of their faith journey.

We renew our Commitment for Life at the service on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November. See George if you would like more information.

## **Gift Aid Service Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup>**

The Advent Gift Day Service takes place on Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup>.

Please bring gifts of money for the Wood Street mission – envelopes will be available before the service and on the day. The service will be led by the Worship Group.