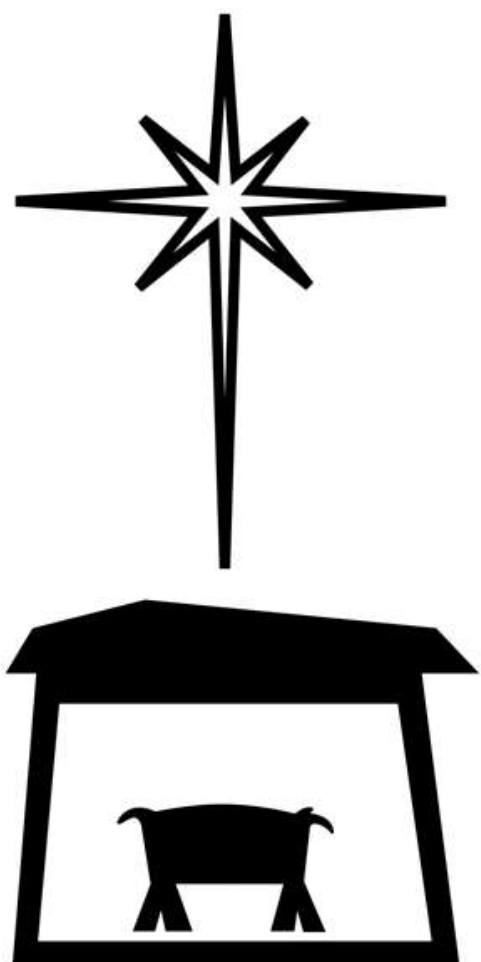


Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church

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

December 2017 - January 2018



Light the light of frankness
in the darkness of fear

Light the light of justice
in the darkness of corruption

Light the light of faith
in the darkness of denial

Light the light of hope
in the darkness of despair

Light the light of love
in the darkness of death

Light the light!

Bo Setterlind, in Hallgrimskirkja, Reykjavik

Interim Moderator

Rev Alan Poolton

Secretary

Kath Lacy

0161 860 4717

From the Editor



“The heavens are telling the glory of God” (Psalm 19 v1)

In November, Chris and I spent a long weekend in Iceland. Iceland is a truly magical place - and it snowed, so we felt like we were in Narnia! Most of Iceland is wild and uninhabited and full of contrasts and natural wonders. On Saturday night we went on a Northern Lights hunt, and were blessed to see them snaking across the huge starry northern skies. The whole party was reduced to incoherent, open-mouthed wonder. Coming up to Christmas it struck me that, if that's what seeing the Northern Lights does to you, what it must have been like for those shepherds on the hills outside Bethlehem when the starry skies were filled with angels singing “Glory to God on high, and on earth peace, goodwill to all men”? No wonder they couldn't stop telling people about it!

Iceland's capital Reykjavik houses the largest church in Iceland, the Hallgrimskirkja. At 244ft high, it is among the tallest structures in Iceland. The inside is austerely beautiful and peaceful - it is almost all white except for 2 icons either side of the altar and a single stained glass window to one side. In one corner there is a candelabrum where you are invited to light a candle, and next to it is a poem by Swedish writer Bo Setterlind. The second half of the poem is on the front of the bulletin; this is the first half, which I want to share with you all as it seems an apt message for us in the world in which we find ourselves in Advent 2017:

“Do not let the darkness prevent you from seeking the light!
And when you have found it let other people see, re-think and be convinced.
If you want the light to live then give rise to the same yearning in other people.”

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

Mel

ADVENT TEA

On the afternoon of the Sunday before Advent, 26 November, we held our customary **Advent Tea**, with activities including crafts, quizzes, fellowship time, carol singing, and then a bring-and-share tea.



It was a true blessing to welcome over 80 people to our afternoon events and tea yesterday and we are sincerely grateful to everyone who was involved in the preparations and delivery for the day:

- George Morton , Kevin Meade and Pat Anstis who prepared and delivered activities in the Old Hall,
- Philip Jones and Walt Johnson who organised the Carol Singing
- Sheila Lyall, Jean Hunt, and Kath Lacy who were in charge of food.
- Ailsa, whose vat of pulled pork saved the day by ensuring there was enough food to feed the unexpectedly large crowd!
- the faithful helpers who spent hours setting up beforehand,
- The Mad Donnas who entertained us so beautifully,
- the 'emergency crew' who jumped up to install tables and chairs to accommodate late comers, including our Mission Enabler, Dave Fraser, who accepted our invitation to come and found himself saying the Grace and shifting tables!
- The big strong lads who helped clear the tables away afterwards.
- Walt Johnson for taking photographs and posting them on the church website.

News Round up

Family News

It was lovely to welcome old and new friends to the Advent Tea on 26 November, including **Catherine Clegg**, still sprightly at the ripe old age of 97!

On a sadder note, in November we said goodbye to three dear friends and longstanding members of Wilbraham St Ninians: **Yvonne Tomes, May Branney** and **Marjorie Burton**. They will all be greatly missed.

Melanie Hall has decided to take Voluntary Redundancy from her job and is taking a little “time-out” to decide what to do next. With one child still at university, retirement is sadly not yet an option!

One of our young people, **Gwenver Salmon** (daughter of Sian) is moving with her job from Bristol to Leeds. She will be working on obtaining energy from waste, one of the ways in which consumers can be provided with more sustainable energy.

Rosa Hall is fulfilling a childhood ambition to do a parachute jump on December 2nd. She is doing this with work colleagues in aid of “Destination Florida”, a Salford-based charity which works with children who have life threatening and life limiting medical conditions, and their parents or guardians. This charity organises life-enhancing biannual trips to Florida for around 75 children from across the United Kingdom, which also gives their families and carers a much-needed break. If you’d like to donate, Mel will bring a sponsor form to church on Sunday 3rd, or you can donate online at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/shieldskydive>.

Mario Posada will be returning from Colombia to Manchester to spend Christmas with his family. We wish him a safe journey and a happy stay.

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Church News

Missional Partnerships: An ad-hoc church meeting authorised the Elders to respond to the question posed by Synod: “What should be the priority for stipendiary ministry”. After prayerful reflection and discussion, there was a broad consensus that ordained ministers should act as enablers, who understand their congregations and equip them to explore and develop their own ministry, in whatever form that may take. We would like ideas and leadership, and people who will spend as much time on fellowship as they do on worship. We are thankful to Rev Alan Poolton for moderating the discussions, pointing out that Synod views that the new model of ministry will not just happen overnight, but will grow and develop.

Lay presidency: Mel Hall attended the lay presidency training at Gatley URC, facilitated by the 3 Mission Mentors, and she is now authorised to preside at Holy Communion. It was both scary and empowering!

Church Doors: Both sets of front doors have been cleaned and varnished, and the managers hope you can notice the difference! They look much brighter as you walk in through the doors. Thank you to the Managers for organising this (and other) repairs.

Afternoon Congregation: Thanks to a generous grant from Manchester Pride, members of the Afternoon Congregation were able to visit Chester. They enjoyed a walk round the walls, an open top bus ride and a boat trip on the River Dee. You can see the photographs that they took on the Metropolitan Church website or Instagram page. Philip was also able to report on two recent successes in asylum cases that the congregation has supported, one of which was extremely complex. We give thanks for the time, energy, expertise and commitment that the Afternoon Congregation members give into their mission to asylum-seekers.

Thank you to **Walt Johnson** for making a sign for the noticeboard to advertise that we are now registered for same-sex marriages

Dates & Rotas

Sun Dec 3	Rev Fleur Houston Communion
Sun Dec 10	Gift Day Service Worship Group (Money gifts for Wood St Mission please)
Sun Dec 17	Carol Service: Elders & Congregation Followed by faith lunch & Church Meeting 1.45
Sun Dec 24	Rev Alan Poolton 10.45 am
Sun Dec 24	Christmas Eve Communion Service 11.30 pm Rev Valerie Davies
Sun Dec 31	United Service at Wilbraham St Ninians Worship Group
Sun Jan 7	Walt Johnson
Sun Jan 14	Rev Alan Poolton
Sun Jan 21	Rev Tony Burnham
Sun Jan 28	Worship Group

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

CAROL SERVICE AND CHURCH MEETING SUNDAY 17th DECEMBER

The Carol Service on Sunday 17th 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 3	Susan Posada	<i>Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7,17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37</i>
Dec 10	Sian Richards	<i>Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2,8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8</i>
Dec 17	Kevin Meade	<i>Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11; Psalm 126; Luke 1:46b-55 (Magnificat); 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8,19-28</i>
Dec 24 (morning)	Cathy Morgan	<i>2 Samuel 7:1-11,16; Luke 1.46b-55 Psalm 89:1-4,19-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38</i>
Dec 24 (eve)	TBC	<i>Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14: Luke 2:1-14</i>
Dec 31	Joyce Henry	<i>Ezekiel 36:24-28; John 3:1-17; Luke 22:14-71</i>
Jan 7	Kevin Meade	<i>Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11</i>
Jan 14	Ella Burton	<i>1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6,13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51</i>
Jan 21	Ian Meadowcroft	<i>Jonah 3:1-5,10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20</i>
Jan 28	Mandy Pearks	<i>Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28</i>

***Please check readings with the preacher in good time before the service.
Some readings may not match those in the URC Prayer Handbook***

Advent / Christmas Services

The **Gift Day Service** will be held on 10th December and will be led by the Worship Group. The theme is “Preparing the Way, Pointing the Way” and we will be exploring the mission and message of John the Baptist.

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

The **Carol Service** takes place on Sunday 17th December at 10.45 am and is followed by a faith lunch and Church Meeting.

As usual we are sharing a **Christmas Eve Midnight Service** starting at 11.30pm, with our friends from Metropolitan Church and anyone who wishes to come and share a welcome pause in the Christmas rush. This will be a time to stop and remember what Christmas is really about as we celebrate the coming of God coming among us in the form of a vulnerable baby. 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 (Monday 25th) at Wilbraham St Ninians; Central URC has a service at 10.45 am led by Christine Howard.

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

