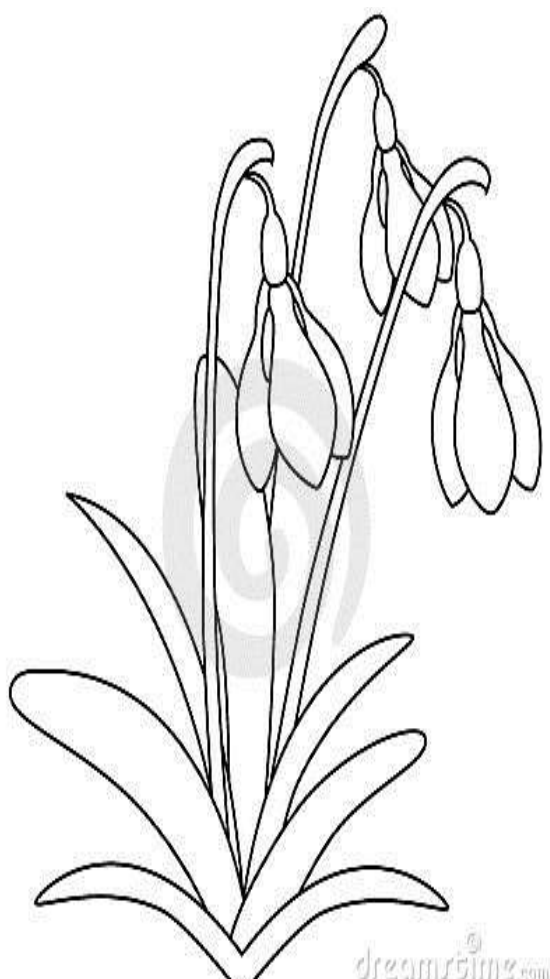


Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church

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

February 2018



Come, let our hearts be glad
and our spirits rejoice,
for God has shown us the path of
life
and leads us in the ways of
peace.

May the seeds of hopefulness be
planted in our hearts today
and the fruits of hopefulness
blossom and grow within our
community.

*"Invocation" Kate McIlhagga "The Green Heart of the
Snowdrop" Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow*

Interim Minister

Rev Alan Poolton

Secretary

Kath Lacy

0161 860 4717



From the Interim Minister..... February 2018

Our interim minister, Rev Alan Poolton, has written this article for the Synod newsletter, outlining his work with the afternoon congregation on the “These Walls Must Fall” campaign but also his thoughts on what it’s like to work with our 2 congregations.

“These Walls Must Fall”

During the autumn of 2016, Synod asked all ministers to release 25-30% of their time to offer to a church without a minister. I, perhaps somewhat naively believed that this was what we were all going to do so with the support of Area Pastoral Committee I simply changed roles at Wilbraham St Ninian’s from Interim Moderator to Interim Minister and began to get more involved in the life of the congregation. In practice, I took pastoral charge of 2 congregations: a very open and welcoming, but small, morning congregation, and a growing afternoon group comprising the former Metropolitan Church. Perhaps I should say that I was no stranger to this group. Along with Don Firth I had led a service of welcome when we had taken 25 - 30 folk into membership of the URC and I am privileged to count their former minister Rev Andy Braunston as a good friend.

All this could only have happened with the active support of my 2 existing churches - Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme who have been generous and realistic in their acceptance of the way that churches will need to release and to share their ministers. I could not have done any of this without their active support, and they have my thanks.

This article isn’t about me; it is mainly about advertising the project “**These walls must fall**” organised by detention UK which focuses on the plight of asylum seekers held in detention, often contrary to Home Office guidelines. I have seen some of these folk at first hand, I have worshipped with them and some have become my friends. They do not deserve to be treated in the way that many are.

Finally, I now have 3 churches, 5 congregations and including the new members currently going through the process of learning about the URC, over 220 active members. There are also around 40 LGBT Asylum seekers. This allows me to speak from a position of having reduced my established workload in order to take on new responsibilities elsewhere - a theme much on the mind of many in this Synod - So is it really possible to have fingers in so many pies and still offer pastoral ministry? Well... it depends on what you mean. On the down side, no I don't do many of the things ministers used to do in the "old days". On the upside, we are doing more than keeping all the bases covered:

Cheadle Hulme has an active program of church improvement, working with local groups and has a franchise with a local pre-school not for profit community provider

Bramhall has recently re-appointed a community worker and the church is currently reviewing what they do, why and who for - with a view to making the church buildings more in keeping with the mission of the church.

Wilbraham St Ninian's are amongst the most open and non-judgmental group of people I have had the privilege to work with. There is a single eldership for both congregations who serve very different communities. The morning congregation is very focused around Chorlton and has close ties with community groups such as "Chorlton Good Neighbours" who have a membership of around 500 older people and a full time office in the church. The afternoon congregation draws people from the LGBT community from all over the North West and north Wales and provides an inspirational service for the Asylum seeker community. (I attend monthly "First Wednesdays" session at the LGBT forum in Manchester) and they work with local suppliers for food bank and other provisions for that community who are probably amongst the most needy and discriminated against group in society yet they maintain a degree of grace and dignity which I find humbling. *Best wishes, Alan*

News Round up

Family News

Many of you will remember Blanche Lloyd, a faithful member of the morning congregation. It has been a pleasure to welcome Blanche's daughter **Margaret**, who has recently returned back to the area and has been worshipping with us regularly.

We send our condolences to **Chris Burton** and family, on the death of Chris's father's wife Eileen last month. Please remember Chris's father and the Burton family in your prayers.

We send best wishes for a speedy recovery to **Jean Hunt**, who has been missing in action for several weeks with a bad cold, **David Williams** who has been plagued with a cough and bad chest for weeks, **Ella Burton**, who has also been plagued with a cough, sore throat and loss of voice (thankfully now returning!) and **Enid Woods** who has not only been generally unwell, but has also been struggling with bad ankles and a swollen knee. Keep them all in your prayers.

Women's World Day of Prayer

Women's World Day of Prayer service will be held on Friday March 2nd at 7.00pm at Chorlton Methodist church. The service has been compiled by women from Suriname and is called "All God's Creation is Very Good!". All are welcome to attend - see Kath Lacy to volunteer to read.

Synod Roadshows

We have another round of Synod Roadshows at which the elders of our churches can further consider our sharing in Missional Discipleship and Missional Partnerships. The South Area Roadshow will be held on Friday 2nd March from 2pm to 4pm at Bramhall URC and 7pm to 9pm at Macclesfield (and we have raised the issue of the clash with WWDP!).

Lent Gift Aid

Lent will soon be upon us and, as usual, WStN will be having a Lent Gift Day. Please would you give some thought to who we want to support this year and let one of the Elders know your ideas. Thank you.

Coffee Mornings

Building on the success in 2017 we will be holding a “Big Brew” coffee morning for Fair Trade Fortnight in late February, and a Christian Aid coffee morning during Christian Aid week.

These Walls Must Fall

The "These Walls Must Fall" campaign is a campaign against the practice of immigration detention. Several of our afternoon congregation have experienced the horror of immigration detention and many are involved with this campaign. There is a meeting for Greater Manchester campaigners on Thursday 1st February, 6.00pm – 8.00pm at Cross Street Chapel, Cross Street, Manchester, M2 1NL.

If you would like to know more about the campaign against the detention of Asylum seekers please visit: <http://detention.org.uk/signup/>

This photograph was taken last Sunday when 57 of the afternoon congregation met for worship.



Dates & Rotas

January 28`	Worship Group: Melanie Hall
February 4	Worship group: Chris Burton
February 11	Rev Dr Walter Houston
February 11 4:30pm	All are invited to the 4.30pm service followed by pancakes
February 14	Ash Wednesday Service at WStN 7pm
February 18	Rev Alan Poolton
Tuesday February 20	Lent group 7pm – 8.30pm
February 25	Rev Fleur Houston
February 26	Fairtrade Fortnight begins
Wednesday February 28	Lent group 7pm – 8.30pm
Friday March 2	Women's World Day of Prayer 7pm at Chorlton Methodist
March 4	Worship Group

Open Church

The church is open for quiet reflection and prayer every Thursday morning 10:00am – 12:00pm

Readers & Readings

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

January 28	Ella Burton	<i>Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28</i>
February 4	Brenda Beckett	<i>Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11,20c; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39</i>
February 11	Melanie Hall	<i>2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9</i>
February 18	Alistair Lyall	<i>Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15</i>
February 25	Chris Burton	<i>Genesis 17:1-7,15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38; Mark 9.2-9</i>
March 4	Kevin Meade	<i>Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22</i>

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

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

Church Meetings (Sundays 1.45pm)	Elders Meetings (Mondays at 7.30pm)	
March 18th	January 22nd	June 11th (if required)
June 17th	February 26th	July 23rd
September 16th	March 12th (if required)	September 10th (if required)
December 16th	April 23rd	October 22nd
	May 21st	November 26th
		December 10th (if required)

LENT GROUPS AT WStN

The two congregations of Wilbraham St Ninian's are holding joint Lent Groups and services at the church. Each week's session will be based **loosely** on a section of the **Nature, Faith and Order of the URC**, at 761 in Rejoice and Sing or online at: https://www.urb.org.uk/images/Free-Ebooks/What_is_the_URC_Statement.pdf

Themes of the sessions are as follows (but they may not necessarily run in the order below!):

- Salvation and our call
- Scripture and authority
- Tradition and "new statements of faith"
- Working ecumenically and with other faiths
- Being Christian and political

Weds 14 Feb 7pm	Ash Wednesday Service
Tue 20 Feb, 7pm	Lent 1
Wed 28 Feb, 7pm	Lent 2
Tue 6 Mar, 7pm	Lent 3
Wed 14 Mar, 7pm	Lent 4
Tue 20 Mar, 7pm	Lent 5
Thursday 29 March	Maundy Thursday Seder meal
Friday 30 March 3pm	Good Friday Service

This is an approximate timetable for the Lent group sessions:

7 pm	Arrive and get refreshment (tea/coffee, plain Lent-suitable biscuit!!)
7:10 – 7:30	Worship and prayer (in various styles)
7:30	Introduction and discussion
8:30	Close (at the latest)

If you would like to attend but need transport or any kind of assistance, or if you can offer assistance, please talk to one of the Elders.

All are welcome!