

Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church

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

April 2018



Marysia Kowalchuk's quilt of the women at the tomb

'Why do you look for the living
among the dead?

He is not here, but has risen

Luke 24:5

So Christ is risen!

Risen again

in the midst of it all –

that in some amazing way

we too

may be a people of hope

who walk in the light,

imbued with the Spirit.

Peter Millar, "Fire and Bread", WGRG, Glasgow

Interim Minister

Rev Alan Poolton

Secretary

Kath Lacy

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“Alleluia! He is Risen!”



Three of the four Gospels report that Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene following his resurrection. Two of the Gospels say that Jesus' first post-resurrection appearance was to Mary alone, and the accounts include some description of Mary's bewildered, frightened and joyful reactions as well as the condescending dismissal she initially received when she shared the good news with the others.

We think we know who she was: the “sinful woman” - a prostitute even - who anoints Jesus' feet with her tears; but that woman is never named. Luke's Gospel tells us that actually Mary is from Galilee; she is the woman from whom Jesus delivered seven demons. Jesus healed Mary and set her free from whatever those demons were, and she had been journeying (literally) with him ever since.

“Magdalene” could come from “Magdala”, a town in Galilee, however Luke makes it sound like a nickname - like those given to Jesus' male disciples. “Magdalene” means “tower”. Towers are very visible and they tend to stay in place when rough weather comes. Perhaps her nickname came about because of her persistent presence: Mary Magdalene was devoted. She stayed around, even when others fled, even in that place of death.

It's there in that place of death that the unimaginable happens: Mary is told that the one who had rescued her & set her free, the one she had *seen* crucified, is alive. He has been raised from the dead and, because she dared to stay around, **she** would be the one to run in fear & joy to share this world changing news.

We can imagine Mary running, breathless, propelled by hopeful expectation, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. In those moments, Mary Magdalene would have been the only one who had seen the risen Lord; she would have been the only one in all of history to have heard the good news; she alone was the herald of the Resurrection. In those few minutes, she **was** the church.

When Mary reached the others and announced the good news, the church became, for a time, a handful of frightened believers; but that church grew until there are more than a billion people across five continents, one people of God. Could Mary ever have imagined the world-changing power of her simple message? The world we inhabit, of course, would have been unrecognisable. Yet the message we bear is the same; we are heralds of the same Gospel, sharers in the same mission: to testify to the great deeds of God, to invite every person to faith in Jesus Christ.

“Alleluia! He is Risen!”

(If you are interested in discovering more about who Mary Magdalene really was, you could go and see “Mary Magdalene” in cinemas now. Starring Rooney Mara as Mary and Joaquin Phoenix as Jesus, the film offers a debunking of many of the myths about Mary Magdalene, and was co-written by the playwright Helen Edmundson, sister of our own Sue Posada!)

**The Elders of
Wilbraham St
Ninian’s wish you
all a happy, holy
and blessed Easter**



He is
Risen
Alleluia!

News Round up

Family News

News of not one, not two, but three leg operations this month!

Fiona Royle has had a knee operation and is recovering nicely. She has exercises to do but currently has stitches and is restricted by bandages. Obviously, playing the organ is out for a few weeks and we are grateful to Philip Jones of the afternoon congregation and our own Joyce Henry, who are stepping into the breach while Fiona nurtures her knee back to health.

Lee Battle has had an operation on her “good” foot. She will be using a wheelchair to get about for a while. Once she recovers she will resume her training for ministry with a placement at Heald Green URC.

John Piper has had to have an operation on a ruptured tendon between the kneecap and the tibia, due to a bad fall. This means his retirement party has been postponed until John recovers.

We send our best wishes to all three for a good recovery.

We are all looking forward to the marriage of **George Morton** and **Andre Groarke** on 21 April at 2pm. Rev Susan Armitage will conduct the service and there will be light refreshments in the New Hall afterwards. We send the happy couple our prayers and best wishes for their wedding day and every day thereafter.

The Big Brew

Thanks to Pat and all who helped during the “Big Brew” Fair Trade coffee morning, which was a pleasant social occasion. Money from the sale of refreshments and of fairly traded goods, along with donations, raised in excess of £170. Pat Anstis sells fairly traded goods all year and any profits are donated to Traidcraft to help support projects in the developing world.

Church News

The discussion at the Church Meeting on March 18th revolved around whether or not we could be forced to hand over our manse funds to the North-West Synod. The Moderator had stated that churches were acting illegally renting out manses. He also stated that he could not sanction calling a minister without knowing that he had funds to buy a manse where it was needed, and that the churches bore responsibility for the lack of action. Our Church Secretary, Kath Lacy, was asked to write to the Synod Resources Committee pointing out that, in our experience of working with the South West Manchester Group of churches, Ministers were called first and then a manse was provided. The meeting asked me to suggest to the Moderator that if he had concrete plans such as "if 10 manses were sold the money raised would be used for X, Y or Z" churches may be more sympathetic. There needs to be more transparency over the use of manse funds: e.g. are they ring-fenced solely to be used for manses? How has money been used in the past?

Lent groups and Holy Week services

There was much lively and thought-provoking discussion at the Lent groups (weather permitting!). Thank you to everyone who led a group, Philip Jones for playing the keyboard and all who participated in the groups. The Maundy Thursday service incorporated a Passover "Seder" meal. It was also a lovely social occasion with an opportunity for the two congregations to get to know one another better. We thank Walt for leading the service, Zenlita and George for reading, Chris for presiding at Communion and Philip, Ella and Mel for the music. The tireless Walt also led the Good Friday service at 3pm, attended by 19 people from both congregations, plus a couple of visitors. We were invited to lay at the foot of the cross stones symbolising the things we wished to leave there, and in return received a red carnation to symbolise the beauty of Christ's love for us and the gifts he gives us.

Dates & Rotas

April 1	Rev Fleur Houston	Easter Sunday
April 5	Open Church Quiet reflection and prayer 10:00am – 12:00pm	
April 8	Eddy Allman	Communion
April 12	Open Church Quiet reflection and prayer 10:00am – 12:00pm	
April 15	Rev Tony Burnham	
April 19	Open Church Quiet reflection and prayer 10:00am – 12:00pm	
April 21	Marriage of George Morton and Andre Groarke Rev Susan Armitage 2pm	
April 22	Worship Group led by Mel Hall	
April 22	Service of Baptism and New Membership Rev Alan Poolton and others 4.30 pm	
April 23	Elders' Meeting 7.30pm	
April 26	Open Church Quiet reflection and prayer 10:00am – 12:00pm	
April 29	Joint service with the Methodists at Manley Park	
May 3	Open Church Quiet reflection and prayer 10:00am – 12:00pm	
May 6	Rev Dr Walter Houston	

Readers & Readings

Taken from "Roots on the Web" 2018 Revised Common Lectionary Year B

April 1 Easter Sunday	Chris Burton	<i>Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; John 20:1-18</i>
April 8	Sue Posada	<i>Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1-2.2; John 20:19-31</i>
April 15	Mandy Pearks	<i>Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48</i>
April 22	George Morton	<i>Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18</i>
April 29	At Manley Park	<i>Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8</i>
May 6	Sian Richards	<i>Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98; 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17</i>

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

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

Service of Membership and Baptism

Sunday 22 April

4.30pm

Join the Metropolitan Congregation to welcome new members of Wilbraham St Ninian's during the afternoon service at 4.30pm

Chorlton Good Neighbours on TV

At the Good Neighbours Coffee Morning on 7th Dec 2017 a BBC team led by Dr Rangan Chatterjee came to interview and film some members for the programme series *“Holding Back the Years”* which was aired on Friday 23rd March on BBC1 (see the Good Neighbours website for a clip of the show). Our own Enid Woods talked eloquently about walking using her stick and how she tries to avoid falls.



Dr Chatterjee talking to Bernard, Enid and Judith in the New Hall

LENT GIFT DAY APPEAL

The Church Meeting decided to give the money from the 2018 Appeal to a **very** local cause: **Chorlton Good Neighbours**.

Good Neighbours have been organising and running activities for older people for over 50 years, helping to ensure that older people keep healthy, independent and involved in the local community. Sadly, cuts in council spending have resulted in cuts to the support given by the council to Good Neighbours. **A generous response to this appeal will assist Good Neighbours in keeping their services going.**

Envelopes are available in church and should be returned on the Gift Day service on Sunday 8th April. Please Gift Aid your donation if you can.

The volunteers of Chorlton Good neighbours, organised by Helen Hibberd MBE and her small staff, give generously of their time and care. They are part of our local mission so let's thank them generously with this appeal!