

# Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church

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

*October 2019*



God of life,

Abundant, generous and  
free,

Let me have the ears to  
hear good news

And the willingness to  
believe it

*Rev Susan Durber, "Surprised by  
Grace", URC Publications 2013*

Secretary

Kath Lacy

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From the Editor..... October 2019

## Abundant Harvest



Welcome to the October Bulletin. As Autumn well and truly arrives, we renew our Commitment for Life and we celebrate our Harvest Festival on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

“Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed...”

So begins the Parable of the Sower, a story that we hear frequently at harvest festival services. We hear first about the three different types of “bad” soil - the hard ground where the seed doesn’t germinate and gets gobbled up by the birds, the rocky ground where seed germinates but withers away because the soil is shallow, and the thorny ground, where the seed grows but is choked by the thorns and doesn’t bear fruit. It’s easy to turn this parable into one of those familiar stories of how pathetic we all are, so that we miss the ending of the story: “Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty”.

We are all too ready to admit that we are shallow or in danger, we can easily accuse ourselves of not being rooted enough in faith or being eaten up by life and be left feeling guilty and inadequate. Rocky, thorny, strangled, guilty - and not ready to rejoice in the harvest at all!

Perhaps because this story is so familiar to us, we can’t imagine what the impact of these stories must have been on Jesus’ audience. First century Palestinians were mainly illiterate, so they would only *listen* to stories, not *read* them. Like children, they knew you have to wait for the end of the story, when it will all be all right.

And didn't Jesus come to bring **good** news? Jesus was definitely **not** one of those preachers who gets a thrill out of telling people how awful they are and how depressing this world really is.

Jesus intended his parables to surprise us and turn us away from conventional wisdom. Like all good stories, they use all kinds of narrative devices like paradox, shock or surprise to make us gasp, laugh, cry or smile. When Jesus told his stories, he sometimes seemed almost playful, sometimes exasperated: "Let anyone with ears listen!", but always wanting his listeners to make up their own minds about what God was saying to them in their lives and contexts. I'm not saying we should ignore our preachers and teachers and gospel writers (please don't!) but we don't have to accept that there is one "correct" interpretation of every parable - Jesus allows, no, expects us to search for what God is saying to us now, in our time and our contexts.

That said, Jesus' parable is honest about the way life is; life can be grim and throttling us and there is so much that is wasted. But if we don't switch off after the depressing stuff but instead continue to the end of the story, we find that God has a way of giving us more than we ever deserve or even expect.

Maybe this story of Jesus, about a sower who went out to sow, is telling us that it's astonishing that anything ever grows at all, and every harvest, when it comes, is utterly miraculous! And so it is with life, and so it is with God. It is sad if we linger on the early bit and miss the amazing harvest at the end. So, let's not get stuck with the first part of the story but let's live for the ending. In the abundant harvest - thirtyfold, sixtyfold or even a hundredfold - there is where we find God's grace and fullness

*Every Blessing, Mel*

# News Round up

## Family News

**Alastair Lyall** is now back home with a care package in place and some adjustments to the house, like extra rails on the stairs. We are pleased to report that Alastair and Sheila have been out for a meal with their son and daughter-in-law. They have also been out for a short walk. Sheila is very appreciative of the cards, letters and phone calls from their friends and would like to thank church folk for all their prayers and good wishes.

**Please continue to remember Alastair and Sheila in your prayers.**

We have been delighted to see **Susanna Mkandwire** in church recently with **Roland** and new baby **Grace**. Susanna reports that Roland is proving to be a great “big brother” to his new sister. She is hoping that Grace will be baptised at the service on Sunday October 27<sup>th</sup> when Rev Valerie Davies will be the minister.

News of some of our young people: **Rowena Salmon** is currently travelling round Russia and the Baltic states, staying with a friend in St Petersburg before embarking on the Trans-Siberian Express! **Rosa Pearks** has settled into her textile design career in Vientiane, Laos, and is enjoying exploring Laos and the surrounding region. Closer to home, **Alex Hall** has begun her final year at Nottingham University and is already doing plenty of reading for her dissertation (her parents are pleased to report!). Big sister **Rosa Hall** has had a promotion at work and starts the second year of her Masters in HR Management at MMU. **Adam Burton** recently starred in the production “First Men in the Moon” which played at Wilbraham St Ninians on September 28<sup>th</sup> as part of Chorlton Arts Festival. Not to be outdone, **Susan Burton** is gaining plaudits designing sets for the Manchester Musical Youth musical theatre company. We wish all our young people well as they continue to amaze us with their talent and hard work.

## **Missional Partnerships**

Our Mission Enabler, **Dave Fraser** is spending 3 weeks walking (and driving) the Camino de Santiago – the Pilgrim’s Way – in northern Spain with his wife and extended family.

## **Church News**

**Manley Park Methodist church** is hosting a coach trip to **Blackpool** on **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October 12.00 – 9.00pm**. The coach leaves Manley Park Church at 12.00pm, leaving you a free afternoon to enjoy the beach, shops and sights of Blackpool and then driving “down the prom” after dark to take in the famous Blackpool illuminations. The coach aims to return to Manley Park Church, Egerton Rd North, around 9pm. Prices are £12.00 for adults / £3.00 for children.

**The 2019 Chorlton Arts Festival** returned to its roots as a festival for the people of Chorlton and Whalley Range by the people of Chorlton and Whalley Range. Wilbraham St Ninians was a venue, hosting “First Men in the Moon”, a mixed media interpretation of the HG Wells story featuring our own Burton family. Members of both congregations performed and exhibited at various events. The MadDonnas played a set at South Manchester Cricket Club where everyone enjoyed themselves. The multi-talented Susan Parry from the afternoon congregation exhibited her watercolours and also played her guitar and sang at The Font bar, and Sian Richards and Ella Burton sang with Open Voice and Ordsall Acapella Singers respectively at St Clements. We are all hoping that the festival will continue next year and celebrate the many talents of the people of our vibrant neighbourhood.

# Dates & Rotas

Oct 6	Dr Adrian Curtis
Oct 10	Open Church: Quiet reflection and prayer 10:00am – 12:00pm
Oct 13	Rev Fleur Houston
Oct 17	Open Church: Quiet reflection and prayer 10:00am – 12:00pm
Oct 19	Coach Trip with Manley Park Methodist Church to Blackpool 12.00 – 9.00pm.
Oct 20 <b>Harvest</b>	Worship Group led by Mel Hall
Oct 24	Open Church: Quiet reflection and prayer 10:00am – 12:00pm
Oct 27	Rev Valerie Davies
Oct 28	Elders Meeting 7.30pm in the vestry
Oct 31	Open Church: Quiet reflection and prayer 10:00am – 12:00pm
Nov 3	Worship Group
Nov 7	Open Church: Quiet reflection and prayer 10:00am – 12:00pm
Nov 10 <b>Remembrance Sunday</b>	Worship Group led by Ella Burton Communion

# Readers & Readings

Taken from "Roots on the Web" 2019 Revised Common Lectionary Year C

October 6	Chris Burton	<i>Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2.1-4; Psalm 37:1-9; 2 Timothy 1:1-14; Luke 17:5-10</i>
October 13	Barbara Williams	<i>2 Kings 5:1-3,7-15c; Psalm 111; 2 Timothy 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19</i>
October 20 <b>Harvest</b>	George Morton	<i>Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Deuteronomy 24:19 – 22</i>
October 27	Kath Lacy	<i>Jeremiah 14:7-10,19-22; Psalm 84:1-7; 2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18; Luke 18:9-14</i>
November 3	Joyce Henry	<i>Isaiah 1:10-18; Psalm 32:1-7; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4,11-12; Luke 19:1-10</i>

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

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## HARVEST FESTIVAL 2019

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October at 10.45am**

**Please bring items for the foodbank, long-life foodstuffs such as:**

Rice, pasta and pasta sauces

Tinned vegetables (peas, carrots, baked beans, kidney beans, potatoes, chopped or plum tomatoes),

Tinned fruit

Jams and preserves

Any other long-life basic larder items such as herbs, spices and condiments

Tea, coffee, sugar,

Personal toiletry items (ideally 'family' brands for use by both men and women) - such as shower gel, shampoo, soap and deodorant - are also very welcome.



At our Harvest Festival Service on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October we will begin the process of renewing our Commitment for Life by giving out *Commitment for Life* envelopes.

*Commitment for Life* is the United Reformed Church's global justice programme. It enables local congregations to pray, advocate and take action for the most vulnerable people. By linking with the poorest regions, we can make a real difference. 75% of *Commitment for Life*'s income supports the work of Christian Aid's partners in the four featured countries. 5% goes to Global Justice Now to support its stand against poverty. 20% is for administration, advocacy, education and grants.

*Commitment for Life*'s partners are *Christian Aid* and *Global Justice Now*. The four partner regions are Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Central America (Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala).

*Commitment for Life* belongs to every congregation. Many congregations choose to support a region in the world through prayer, learning, advocacy, and action for justice. Wilbraham St Ninian's has chosen to support Zimbabwe. Political instability is an ongoing concern in Zimbabwe. Most Zimbabweans face socio-economic crises and every year. Millions rely on food aid. Drought, floods and erratic rainfall patterns are costly. Ruined infrastructure and a broken economy mean that many cannot grow enough food. Church partners focus on food security, nutrition, HIV, health and gender equality.

For more information visit the Commitment for Life website [www.urc.org.uk/cfl](http://www.urc.org.uk/cfl)