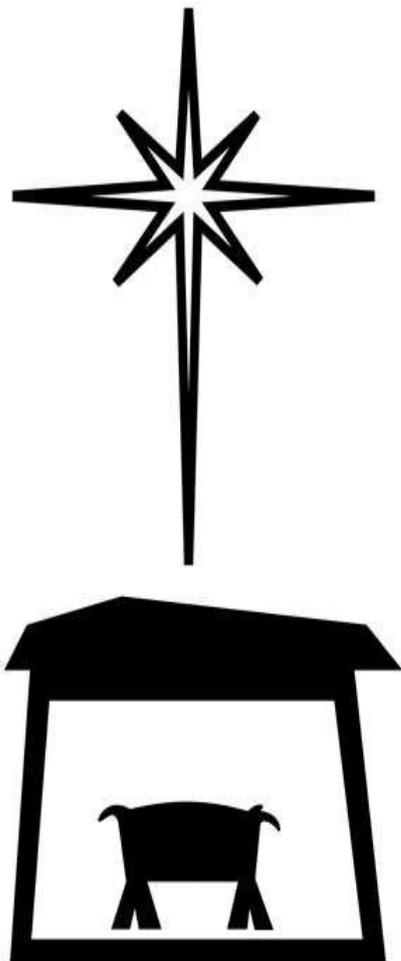


# Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church

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

*December 2019 – January 2020*



The people who walked in  
darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of  
deep darkness -  
on them light has shined.

*Isaiah 9:2*

The light shines in the  
darkness, and the darkness  
did not overcome it.

*John 1:5*

Secretary

Kath Lacy

0161 860 4717



## Advent Hope: Light in the Darkness

On December 12<sup>th</sup> our church will be used as a polling station for the General Election. Engaging in politics enables us to advocate for different values and beliefs, putting them into action through policy-making.

Therefore, I believe that we, as Christians, need to use our opportunities to engage in politics as a chance to love our neighbour and our world. During this election period, we have a chance to show kindness in the way we engage in conversation, listen to the voice of those who might otherwise not be heard, and seek the truth as we engage with political manifestos and dialogue. Difficult, I know, but Jesus never said following him would be easy!

Spending time with God in prayer helps us to consider how to use our voice. We can ask God to deepen our awareness of situations, people or stories which might guide us to show God's love to all. We can reflect on God's promises to creation, and imagine what the Kingdom of God on earth might look like. We know from the news that some candidates are feeling more vulnerable than they should, so we can pray for the peace and safety of candidates that we agree and disagree with, (and their families.)

As we move through Advent, we anticipate the coming of God to our world, not as a God of power and might, but as a vulnerable baby, born into poverty in an occupied country and becoming a refugee. Christmas - the Incarnation - shows us the kind of love we are invited to embody, a love that is based on being alongside God in the weakest and most vulnerable and those who are least able to repay us for our love.

When we look at the choices put before us in this election, do they offer us the chance to show the deep, all inclusive, radical love that God shows us in the Incarnation?

Whoever we vote for (and I urge you to exercise the right to vote that thousands of our forebears fought for) and whatever the result of this election, it's likely that we will all face difficult times in the next few years. The challenges of climate crisis, Brexit, the NHS, poverty - to name but a few - will not be solved easily and quickly, whatever politicians may say. Also, I can honestly say that I cannot remember a time when political discourse has been more volatile - not to say downright dirty and nasty! So, if or when we are tempted to despair at the lies, half-truths, nastiness and cheap political stunts that seem common currency at the moment, let's try to remember that Advent is also the season of hope. Desmond Tutu wrote that "hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness", and Christmas is the time when we remember and celebrate the coming of the Light of World on earth. As John's Gospel tells us "the darkness has never put it out!"

In the Election this Advent, we're invited to love those around us; we are called to consider how the way we use our voice affects others. As "The Message" Bible says "the Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood". So, this Christmas, as Christ embodied God's love for God's world and its people, let us try to embody God's love in our neighbourhoods, communities and nation.

Wishing you and those you love every blessing  
this Christmas and New Year,

*Mel*

# News Round up

## Family & Friends' News

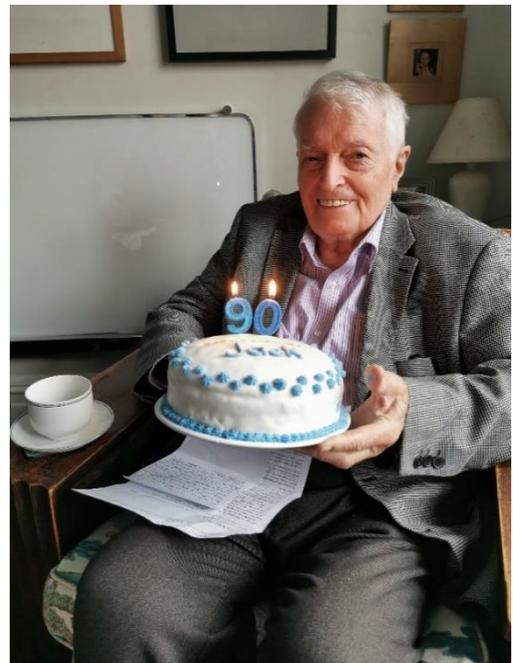
We send our love and condolences to **David and Barbara Williams**, after the death of David's brother. Peter died at the end of November after a period of illness. The funeral will be held in North Wales on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Please keep the Williams family in your prayers at this sad time.

Barbara and David have also been struck down by the same vicious cold/virus that has felled **Kath Lacy**. Kath was too poorly to attend the Elders' meeting but sent along the minutes and agenda and we managed as best we could! Our Mission Mentor, **Dave Fraser**, was also too ill to attend the Elders' Meeting. We send our best wishes for a speedy recovery to everyone who is suffering from illness at the moment.

On a brighter note, there is news of two significant birthdays. **Jenny Johnson** celebrated her birthday on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November which was acknowledged at the pre -Advent lunch.

The Waldo Group, an informal discussion group convened by our dear friend the **Rev Jack McKelvey**, celebrated Jack's 90th birthday with a tea party on Monday 7 October. Jack spoke about the influences in his life, in Ireland, South Africa and as principal of Northern College in Manchester and the individual members talked about their stories of conversion or stimulus in their faith. Pat Anstis provided a splendid and delicious cake.

Thanks to Bob Day for supplying this photograph



## Church News

The pre-Advent lunch on 24<sup>th</sup> November was a great success, with buffet food and songs from  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the MadDonnas. A big “thank you” for the success of the day, goes to everyone: help setting up, donating money and/ or food and participating in the activities and entertainment. It was a real team effort.

**Commitment for Life** donations on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October and afterwards reached a splendid total of **£1,221.00**, including Gift Aid. Thank you to everyone who donates so generously for this valuable work, here and overseas.

At the **Church Meeting on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December**, several Elders will be standing for election / re-election. We will also consider a request for a wedding in November 2020 from two members of the afternoon congregation, which the Elders unanimously agreed to take to the Church Meeting. So please try and attend this important meeting

The afternoon congregation are delighted to announce five more asylum successes in the last 2 months. There are several more cases awaiting hearing dates and some fresh claims awaiting consideration. This has been such a remarkable year that the Afternoon congregation are going to have a party to celebrate on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December in the New Hall after evening worship. Everyone is invited! We are thankful for the Metropolitan Congregation’s mission of welcome and the sheer hard work that goes into supporting every asylum case.

The church will be used as a Polling Station for the General Election on **Thursday December 12<sup>th</sup>**. To avoid disrupting the Good Neighbours’ Coffee Morning in the New Hall, voting will take place in a cordoned-off area at the back of the church, since it was thought that the area outside the Old Hall might cause problems for people trying to get to vote in the dark and possible bad weather.

# Dates & Rotas

December 1	Rev Tony Burnham <b>Communion</b>
December 8	Gift Day service led by Worship Group <b>Please bring donations for the Wood St Mission</b>
December 15	<b>Carol Service</b> led by Worship Group, Elders and Congregation
December 15	<b>Church Meeting</b> 1.45 pm – election of Elders
December 22	Worship Group
December 24	Rev Valerie Davies <b>Christmas Eve service 11.30pm</b> <b>Communion</b>
December 29	United Service at <b>Chorlton Methodist Church</b>
January 5	Worship Group
January 12	Rev Valerie Davies
January 19	“Preaching with a View” – to be confirmed
January 26	Rev Fleur Houston
February 2	Rev Dr Walter Houston

**Open Church:** the church is open for quiet reflection and prayer every Thursday between 10:00am and 12:00pm

**The next Church Meeting will take place on Sunday December 15<sup>th</sup> at 1.45pm.**

# Readers & Readings

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

December 1	Melanie Hall	<i>Isaiah 61:1-3; John 1:19-28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18</i>
December 8	George Morton	<i>Psalm 62:1-9; Isaiah 11:1-10;</i>
December 15	Chris Burton	<i>Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10; Luke 1:46b-55 (Magnificat); James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11</i>
December 22	Kath Lacy	<i>Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25</i>
December 24	Chris Burton	<i>Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12; John 1:1-14</i>
December 29	At Chorlton Methodist	<i>Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23</i>
January 5	Ella Burton	<i>Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12</i>
January 12	Barbara Williams	<i>Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17</i>
January 19	Melanie Hall	<i>Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42</i>
January 26	Cathy Morgan	<i>Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23</i>
February 2	Kath Lacy	<i>Malachi 3:1-5; Psalm 24:(1-6), 7-10 or Psalm 84; Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40</i>

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

**Thank you to Kath Lacy for producing the Readers' Rota and Preaching Plan.**

## Missional Partnership News



### Keeping Updated on Missional Partnership Steering Groups

**Venue: Bramhall URC**

**Date: Saturday 11th January**

**Time: 10-12.00 pm**

This event is for Reps, Elders and anyone interested from all 33 of our churches to meet informally to explore and discuss together the work of our three Missional Partnerships. This is a chance to reflect on where we are up to and to ask questions and raise concerns.

### **Ministry Update: “Save the Date”**

The Elders Meeting on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November learned that we need to “save the date” for a potential “preaching with a view” on the weekend of 18<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Saturday will be an activity day with a morning teaching/ training session, then a lunch followed by a short worship service. On Sunday there will be a service in the morning at one of the churches in our Missional Partnership. We are welcome to drop in to any or all of the events. A Church Meeting would be held on 26<sup>th</sup> January after the weekend.

We don't have any more details yet, but please “save the date” for that weekend, and listen out for the church notices where we will learn more.



**The Elders would like to wish you all a peaceful  
Christmas and send you every good wish for the  
New Year**