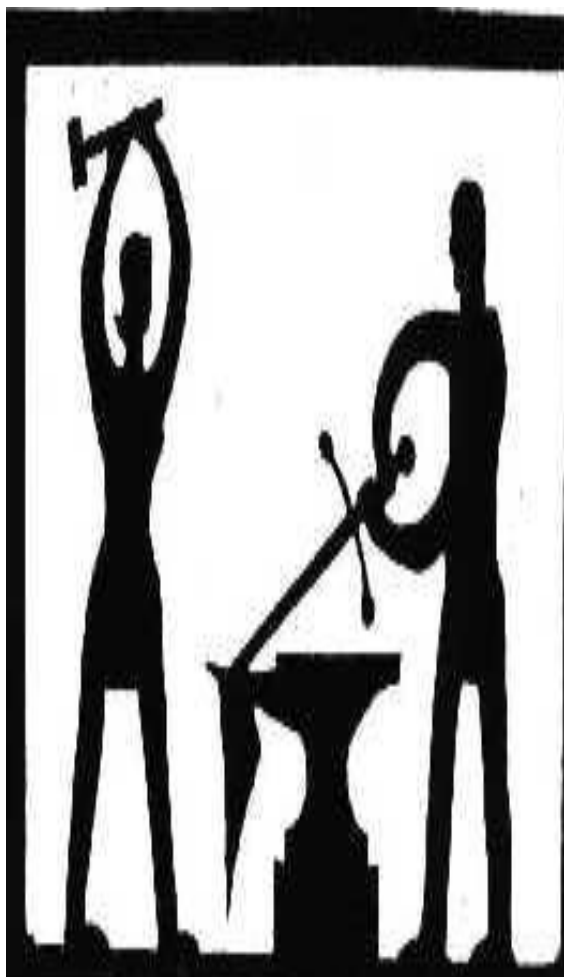


# Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church

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

*February 2020*



*<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the  
nations, and shall arbitrate for  
many peoples;*

*They shall beat their swords  
into ploughshares,  
and their spears into pruning-  
hooks;*

*nation shall not lift up sword  
against nation,*

*neither shall they learn war  
any more*

*Isaiah 2:4*

Secretary

Kath Lacy

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From the Editor..... February 2020



## Holocaust Memorial Day - A Reflection

In Old Testament times, the prophet Isaiah looked up to the heavens and spoke of a time when people everywhere would cease to wage war. They would transform their tools of war

and oppression into creative tools which work for the good of the community: swords into ploughshares.

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January was Holocaust Memorial Day, a day to honour all those who suffered under Nazi persecution, and the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the largest of the Nazi concentration camps. “No more!” people said after the true horror of the genocide emerged.

However, as Holocaust survivor Marian Turksi said, in a moving speech at the site of Auschwitz-Birkenau: “Auschwitz did not fall suddenly from the skies, it was all tiny steps approaching until what happened here behind me did happen,” he said. It’s the subtle steps of hatred and segregation that lead to the acceptance and desensitisation of discrimination, hatred and ultimately mass extermination.

Gisela Feldman, 96, a Jewish refugee who escaped the Holocaust on the SS St Louis with her mother and sister said to the Manchester Evening News: "Hatred is like a weed, it grows underground and by the time it gets to the surface it's too strong to eradicate it." More than 30 members of Gisela’s family died in the Holocaust, including their father. They still don’t know what happened to him.

The 4 survivors who spoke at the Ceremony at Auschwitz all had the same message: it's no good crying for the past if our tears are accompanied by indifference or hostility in the present towards minorities experiencing exclusion, racism and related violence. Only last May we read of 16-year-old Carlos Hernandez dying of flu on the cold concrete floor of his cell in ICE custody in the USA (remember that Anne Frank and her sister died of sickness - typhus - in Auschwitz-Birkenau).

These are challenging times, when in Britain and Europe and in other parts of the world, synagogues and other places of worship are being attacked. Hate speech and hate crime are on the rise. Football racism has risen by 50% over the last year.

There is an urgent need for us to transform weaponised words of cruelty and separation into prophetic words of hope and solidarity. So let's ask ourselves, how many Holocaust survivors' stories contain small acts of kindness? (as true in Rwanda and Darfur as it was under the Nazis!) Fighting back against growing tides of anti-Semitism and racism can seem daunting at first but every act of kindness and solidarity is an act of hope.

As we pause for Holocaust Memorial Day, we too might look up into the heavens and pray for a time of peace, when none shall 'learn war any more'.

*Every Blessing, Mel*

# News Round up

## Family News

It has been good to see many of the congregation who have been absent through illness back in church on Sunday mornings, even of some are not yet fully restored to health. We continue to wish them well as they recover, and keep them in our prayers.

This time last year, **Sue Posada** was flying out to Colombia to join her husband Mario at their house in Venecia, to start a new phase of their lives together. At present their daughter Nadia is living and working in the nearby city of Medellin for a year or two. Pat and Sue have been practising their Spanish by corresponding by email. Your editor is delighted to report that Sue will be visiting Manchester at the end of February! She hopes to be able to come to church on one of the Sundays towards the end of the month, and we look forward to seeing her and drinking the Colombian coffee she's bringing with her (Venecia is in the centre of the coffee-producing area of Colombia).

You will have noticed that this year we did not have the Nativity tableau at the front of the church. This was unfortunately due to illness and injury on the part of the people who usually install it. Local people had commented on its absence, and the church received an email of regret from a local doctor. Although it was sad not to see our lovely nativity tableau shining from the church, it is gratifying to know that it gets noticed and has become a part of Christmas for local residents and passers-by.

## **Church News**

The Gift Day collection on 7<sup>th</sup> December raised £370.00 (£512.50 with Gift Aid) for Wood Street Mission. The Christmas collection raised £161.00 (£201.25 with Gift Aid) for the Booth Centre. Thank you to everyone for your generosity.

Our Treasurer is pleased to report that initial figures for the financial year indicate that the outcome will not be the deficit that was originally expected. Completed figures will be available soon. We all owe thanks to our managers and to our Treasurer, George, for our continued solvency and their prudent stewardship of the church's assets. This year we are planning to refurbish the entrance to the Old Hall - plans are displayed at the back of the church – which will incur significant expenditure.

## **Asylum Successes**

Our afternoon congregation report another two asylum successes in December 2019, followed by another three in January 2020. We give thanks for the work of our friends and ask you to keep all those seeking asylum and all those who have obtained leave to remain in your prayers.

## **World Day of Prayer 2020**

World Day of Prayer (renamed from “Women’s World Day of Prayer”) service will be held on Friday March 6<sup>th</sup> at 7.00pm at Wilbraham St Ninian’s. This year’s service has been devised by women from Zimbabwe and is called “Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk”. All are welcome to attend. Would anyone who wishes to volunteer to participate in the service by reading or leading prayers please see Kath Lacy.

## Dates & Rotas

February 2	Rev Dr Walter Houston
February 9	Rev Tony Burnham
February 16	Worship Group
February 23	Worship Group
Wednesday February 26	Ash Wednesday Service led by Walt Johnson
March 1 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent	Worship Group
Friday March 6	<b>World Day of Prayer</b> 7pm at Wilbraham St Ninians
March 8 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent	Rev Fleur Houston

### Open Church

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

**Please sign up for the Tea Rota at the back of the church.**

**Contributions to the Flower Fund would be welcome.**

# Readers & Readings

Taken from “Roots on the Web” 2020 Revised Common Lectionary Year A

February 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Kath Lacy	<i>Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12</i>
February 9 <sup>th</sup>	George Morton	<i>Isaiah 58:1-9a, (9b-12); Psalm 112:1-9; 1 Corinthians 2:1-12, (13-16); Matthew 5:13-20</i>
February 16 <sup>th</sup>	Chris Burton	<i>Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 119:1-8; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; Matthew 5:21-37</i>
February 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Mandy Pearks	<i>Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2; Psalm 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9</i>
March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Sian Richards	<i>Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Psalm 32; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11</i>
March 8 <sup>th</sup>	Joyce Henry	<i>Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5,13-17; John 3:1-17</i>

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

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

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<b>Church Meetings</b> (Sundays 1.45pm)	<b>Elders Meetings</b> (Mondays at 7.30pm)
March 15th June 21st September 20th December 20th	January 27 <sup>th</sup> February 24 <sup>th</sup> April 27 <sup>th</sup> May 18 <sup>th</sup> (25 <sup>th</sup> is a Bank Holiday) July 27 <sup>th</sup> October 26 <sup>th</sup> November 23 <sup>rd</sup>

## MINISTRY UPDATE

Over the weekend of 18<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> January 2020 **Lee Battle** preached with a view to being called to ministry in our Missional Partnership. On Saturday Lee facilitated a morning teaching / training session, where we were invited to reflect on the way that trees thrive when they live and communicate together in a forest, with their roots going deep and intertwined, and how this relates to the churches and members of the congregations in our missional partnership. Lee also took a number of questions from people in the churches, as we explored how Lee might act as a minister within the 7 churches. A faith lunch was followed by a short, reflective worship service. On Sunday Lee led lively morning worship at Trinity Church, Moss Side, which was well-attended. Church Meetings were held on either 19<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup> January, where the churches voted whether to call Lee to the Partnership.

All the votes have been counted and a decision made; however, at time of writing your editor is unaware of the result. A statement will be read out at church on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February. We know, whatever the outcome, that the decision was made prayerfully and thoughtfully, and we wish Lee every success wherever she finds herself.