



Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church Newsletter



15th July 2020

From the Editor..... June 2020



In these strange times we see people reaching out in kindness to one another: neighbours who have never spoken to one another now chatting away, strangers offering help with shopping, volunteers at foodbanks, rainbows in windows, and the many, many phone calls and attempts to teach video calling to those who can barely operate their TV remote control! We are learning to walk alongside others in a time of pain, fragility and uncertainty.

May we also be aware of the need for kindness towards ourselves; remembering that, even if we can't always find God in our sadness, God will find us and walk alongside us always. Let's allow ourselves to rest, to not compare ourselves to others, and to care for our own souls so that we are better placed to care for others.



Stained Glass Window
by Francis Spear

A Letter from Lee, our New Minister

Hello again!

Thank you so much for the warm welcome that I have received since I began my role on the 1st July. What an interesting time to start my ministry with you! I have to say, since I have begun, I have been consistently amazed at how churches and people have adapted to this situation and found new and innovative ways to keep in-touch with people during this time.



I am aware though that reaching everybody has been difficult – it has been an enormous task made easier for some by the use of technology. Though, for some, technology is inaccessible and so now we are offering services that can be dialled into by phone and I am researching other methods of staying in-touch.

The plan for the beginning of my time in the partnership, in a sense has not changed, because the most important thing to me at the moment is that I listen, to your concerns, to your joys and everything in between. The only thing that has changed is how I can do that now that physical meetings are not yet possible.

I am always available on my email which is leebattle@hotmail.com and on my phone – 07939 -319 818.

My ordination has now been arranged for 3pm on 1st August, unfortunately due to social distancing requirements, I am unable to invite you all, as I would wish to, the event will be streamed live on YouTube and I will let you know the link when I have it.

As we know God does not just dwell within church walls, but dwells in each of us and is with us on both our individual journeys and on this new journey we are taking with the Missional Partnership. I can't wait to see what God has in store for us!

Yours in service, *Lee Battle*

URC Updates



Dave Fraser and Lee Battle are holding a Zoom meeting **on Tuesday 21st July**

7.30pm – 9.00pm for Elders and Church members to look at “Life after Lockdown” and try to generate practical ideas for congregations and ministry teams as we face the future together. If you are interested in attending this event, please email Dave Fraser at davefraser24@gmail.com

There are 2 mini-conferences for Church Treasurers & Lettings Organisers (Wednesday 22nd July, 7.30 – 9.30pm) and Church Secretaries and Pulpit Secretaries to enable them to begin looking ahead to the challenges of opening up our buildings for public worship and for the users of our buildings. Kath and George will no doubt report back in due course!

From the end of September, Lee Battle plans to offer a mid-week evening 'partnership' fellowship, which will be on Zoom and open to everyone. On Saturday 26th September at 19:30, she will be hosting a quiz night for the partnership and doing her best Bruce Forsyth impression - it will be nice to see you - to see you nice! Lee is not ignoring those who are unable to access Zoom and will be exploring other ways of meeting people in their homes.

URC General Assembly 2020 was cancelled apart from an Act of Worship within which the new Assembly Moderators Rev Clare Downing and Mr Peter Pay, and the new General Secretary, the Rev Dr John Bradbury, were inducted into office. This took place on Saturday 11th July at 10.30am.

Family News

David and Barbara Williams are still in Wales and only just coming out of lockdown. It was David's birthday on Sunday 12th July and family members travelled from Manchester to have lunch in the garden. (Socially distancing of course). The weather was beautiful and Barbara and David were thrilled to see the family.

Alastair Lyall enjoyed his birthday with lots of cards and the gift of a new bench for the front garden.

Jenny Johnson and Enid Woods are both well.

Alex Hall has received confirmation that she has obtained a First-Class honours BA degree in Theology and Religious Studies at Nottingham University. Alex will be studying for a Master's Degree in Gender, Sexuality and Culture at the University of Manchester from October and we wish her all the best as she continues her studies. Alex also celebrated her 21st birthday on 17th July; celebrations were perhaps a little quieter and socially-distanced than we had imagined but the family were able to enjoy lunch together in Chorlton.

Alex's Mum, your editor Mel Hall, also has a "milestone" birthday on August 5th. It's a shame she can't take advantage of the free swimming right now, and has to wait another 6 years for the bus pass!

Sue Posada has returned to Colombia on a humanitarian flight organised by the Colombian consulate. Mario had to drive 500 kilometres (310 miles) to Bogota to collect her!

Sue reports that it is tense in Colombia as cases are on the rise again, and, sadly, Covid-19 has reached her little town of Venecia. Sue says a big “Hello” to everyone and is sad that she didn’t get to reconnect with everyone as planned. She thinks of us all when she listens to the services sent by Rev Andy Braunston and imagines we are all in church together enjoying the service. Our lovely window provides a backdrop for Sue’s imaginings.



Sue’s daughter Nadia (in white on the left) is working in Colombia and continues to raise funds with her friend Shay to help desperate families in Venecia, some of whom have literally nothing. She and Shay originally aimed to raise £300 to buy food; they have now raised £10,582 in just 3 months and are aiming to take the total to £12,000. If anyone would like to contribute then you can do so by going to Nadia’s fundraising page on JustGiving and donating money. (Details on the back page)

Ella Burton and Mel Hall attended an online “Lay Preachers’ Conference” on July 11th and 12th, run by Northern College staff. Participants looked at the impact of trauma and the need for self-care; connecting with Scripture during the pandemic, reflecting on God’s promise to God’s people in Romans 11:1-2, 29-32; and exploring ways of building and maintaining a sense of community during and after lockdown.

Online Worship and Support During Lockdown

For people who are comfortable with computers and smartphone, the URC offers some support for prayer and worship while churches are shut.

Sunday Zoom Service – Afternoon Congregation

The Afternoon Congregation offer a short service of prayer, reading, music and reflection every Sunday at 4.30pm, via the Zoom online video platform, lasting around 45 minutes. If you would like to participate please email contact@metropolitanchurch.org.uk

URC Daily Devotions

Every morning at 6am the United Reformed Church sends out a daily devotion – a reading, reflection and prayer – via email to more than 1,700 people. If you would like to subscribe to the Daily Devotions, they can be found at <https://devotions.urc.org.uk/>

URC Sunday Worship

An online worship service from the United Reformed Church will be available **from 10am onwards** via a link on the URC's Daily Devotions webpage. Just go to <https://devotions.urc.org.uk/> any time from 10am onwards and click on the relevant link to listen to the service.

Missional Partnership Coffee Morning – Wednesdays 11am

Dave Fraser, the Mission Mentor for the Manchester South Missional Partnership invites us to join him for a brief act of devotion and then sharing of concerns for our church and community each Wednesday morning at 11 am (log in from 10.45 am).

Online worship offered by Other URC Congregations

The United Reformed Church (URC) has compiled a list of its churches which are live streaming acts of worship, offering sermons as podcasts or audio files, or offering recordings of services for people who are unable to access church due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. You can view the list at

<https://urc.org.uk/news/3385-coronavirus-worshipping-digitally>

Reform Magazine free online

“Reform” magazine is free to read online while churches are closed for worship. It is available at:

<https://ocean.exacteditions.com/magazines/762/issues/>

Lectionary Bible Readings for this month

July 19 th	<i>Isaiah 44:6-8; Psalm 86:11-17; Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30,36-43</i>
July 26 th	<i>1 Kings 3:5-12; Psalm 119:129-136; Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33,44-52</i>
August 2 nd	<i>Isaiah 55:1-5; Psalm 145:8-9,14-21; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21</i>
August 9 th	<i>1 Kings 19:9-18; Psalm 85:8-13; Romans 10:5-15; Matthew 14:22-33</i>
August 16 th	<i>Isaiah 56:1,6-8; Psalm 67; Romans 11:1-2a,29-32; Matthew 15:(10-20),21-28</i>

Feed My Family, Colombia

Venecia is a small town located in Antioquia, Colombia. The effects of the Coronavirus have resulted in many families struggling to buy the basic necessities such as milk, arepas (a corn cake) and eggs.

Many communities in Colombia live day-to-day so are completely unprepared for months of economic paralysis and the isolation is already causing emergencies. Many families are already living below the poverty line and rely on working members of the family; without this or any help from the government they are left without any money to put food on the table, which usually costs as little as £10 a week.

Nadia Posada and her friend Shay are asking for a small donation to help some of these families survive throughout this period by providing food packages to those who are most in need and without food and basic hygiene products. A donation of just £5 equal to 24,000 pesos could feed a family of 4 for at least 3 days. Just £10 will feed 3 families for a week.



For donations £10 and over Nadia and Shay will personalise messages to the family that you will be helping so please leave your name!

To help Nadia and Shay reach their target of £12,000 and feed families in Colombia, take your debit/credit card and go to Nadia's JustGiving page at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/nadia-shay>

Thank you and stay safe!