



Wilbraham St Ninian's United Reformed Church Newsletter



*December 2021 -
January 2022*



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

John 1:5

From the Editor... December - January 2021



Advent Waiting and Hoping

Each Sunday in Advent, we light a candle on our Advent wreath. Each candle represents a different theme: hope, peace, joy, and love. The first Sunday's candle is the candle of hope, and this year, perhaps more than ever because of the continuing pandemic, we long to see the light of hope in our lives.

While 'hope' in English is abstract, 'hope' in Hebrew provides a strong concrete image. In Hebrew, hope is the word *tikvah* - from the Hebrew root *qavah*, which denotes waiting expectantly, but also a twisting or binding. It is the word used for making rope. Hundreds of thin strands of fabric - each one alone could easily snap - but, tightly bound together, they form a rope that cannot be broken. A woven cord or rope cannot only be seen with our eyes, but it is something we can grasp hold of with our hands. In other words, hope is something real enough that we can *cling* to it.

How do we cling to hope and keep waiting? How do we keep doubt from overwhelming us? This *waiting* is *qavah*; we are bound together with each other and with God, and so, we are empowered to take courage and make room for God to work in our lives, the God who brings light out of darkness and brings hope into our waiting.

**those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.**

(Isaiah 40:31)

Advent Blessings, Mel

Church News

Our friend the **Rev Andy Braunston** has been appointed to the new post of Minister for Digital Worship to serve the whole URC. As part of his role Andy will develop a range of digital worship ministries for the URC and continue and extend the Daily Devotions and



Daily Devotions Sunday Service formats. Andy says, "I am honoured to be appointed to this role and am looking forward to developing the Devotions and the Sunday services to make them ever more useful tools of discipleship." Andy should be starting his new role in mid to late February. He and Ian will remain in Glasgow for now but, in the medium term, they are planning to move rather further north to Orkney, where Andy and Ian have spent many happy holidays.

Additional Elders and Managers are needed to help the smooth running of the church. If you are interested please speak to any of the Elders.

All members of the morning congregation have been double vaccinated against Covid 19 and many have also received their third jab to maintain protection levels. **However**, as a congregation we must continue to be cautious and alert to the dangers of the virus, especially in the light of the disturbing news about the new Omicron variant. We will continue with our Covid-19 safety measures: social distancing, mask-wearing, hand sanitising etc.



Readers are required for our Carol Service on December 19th. Offers of help welcomed.

Family News

A celebration of the life of **Sidney (Sid) Beckett** took place on Tuesday 9th November at Manchester Crematorium; the Revd Valerie Davies was the officiant. Sid had a long and successful teaching career ending up as Head Teacher at Lily Lane Primary School. He was liked and respected by all who knew him. Happily married to Brenda for over 51 years, Sid had found his soul mate to share his life. Please keep Brenda in your prayers.

In mid-November **Chris Burton** became ill with Covid and isolated at home. **Ella Burton** thought she had the 'super cold' but, on being tested, found that she too had Covid. Ella's condition deteriorated quite rapidly and she was taken into the ICU at Wythenshawe Hospital. She continued to deteriorate, was put into an induced coma and placed on a ventilator. After a very worrying week Ella was taken off the ventilator and placed in Ward A2. Ella has made remarkable progress since then and is now home, receiving physiotherapy and support to help her recovery.

We send our condolences to **Paul England**, who has been worshipping with us for several months. Paul's wife Anne has been ill for some time and, sadly, she passed away on Saturday 27th November. Please keep Paul and his family in your prayers.

Eric Morgan remains in hospital receiving palliative care. Eric and the Morgan family remain in our prayers.

Some sad news from Anne, the daughter of **Hilda Crawford** who attended St Ninian's until 2001 when she moved away from the area. Sadly, Hilda passed away on Monday 20th November. She received our newsletters regularly and took a keen interest in their contents. We send our condolences to Anne and please keep Hilda's family in your prayers.



Jenny Johnson celebrated her 100th Birthday on 23rd November. She received many cards, including one from HM the Queen, and had a party at her home. Congratulations, Jenny, we wish you many happy returns.

Sue Posada is coming over to the UK from Colombia in early December and hopes to attend church while she is here. We look forward very much to seeing her and to hearing news of her and the family.

A memorial service was held for **Philip Jones** in church on Friday 5th November. The service was led by the Rev Dr Adam Scott, supported by the Rev Andy Braunston who delivered the eulogy and the Rev Lee Battle who operated the Zoom. 70 people attended in person (mainly from the Metropolitan Congregation past and present) and many more attended on Zoom. Philip will be remembered for his wit, his wisdom and his care and concern for LGBT asylum seekers. Philip was an Elder and Manager of Wilbraham St. Ninian's and a worship leader for the Metropolitan Congregation.

Dates for your diary

Sunday 28 th November 10.45 am	Advent Sunday Service Dr Adrian Curtis
Sunday 5 th December 10.45 am	Communion Service Rev John Grundy Communion led by Mel Hall
Sunday 12 th December 10.45 am	Gift Day Service Mel Hall
Sunday 19 th December 10.45 am	Carol Service WStN Elders and members
Sunday 19 th December	Zoom Church Meeting 2.00pm
Monday 20 th December https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85285027328	Zoom Quiet Christmas Service 7.30pm Rev Lee Battle Meeting ID: 852 8502 7328
Friday 24 th December 11.30pm	Rev Valerie Davies Christmas Eve Service with Communion
Sunday 26 th December 11.00am	Zoom Service led by Rev Lee Battle https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85285027328 Meeting ID: 852 8502 7328
Sunday 9 th January 10.45am	Walt Johnson
Sunday 16 th Jan 10.45am	Preacher tbc
Sunday 23 rd January	Rev Valerie Davies
Sunday 30 th January	Preacher tbc

Lectionary Bible Readings for this period

Taken from "Roots on the Web" Lectionary Year C

Nov 28 th Advent 1	<i>Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36</i>
Dec 5 th Advent 2	<i>Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79 (Benedictus); Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6</i>
Dec 12 th Advent 3	<i>Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6 (Canticle); Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18</i>
Dec 19 th Advent 4	<i>Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55 (Magnificat); Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45(46-55)</i>
Dec 24 th / 25 th Christmas Eve / Day	<i>Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)</i>
Dec 26 th Christmas 1	<i>1 Samuel 2:18-20,26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52</i>
Jan 2 nd Epiphany	<i>Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7,10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12</i>
Jan 9 th Baptism of Jesus	<i>Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17,21-22</i>
Jan 16 th Epiphany 2	<i>Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; John 2:1-11</i>
Jan 23 rd Epiphany 3	<i>Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21</i>
Jan 30 th Epiphany 4	<i>Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30</i>

Prayer for Advent

Jesus, as we begin Advent, we pray for your light to shine,
especially for folks experiencing difficult times
or missing a loved one who has died.

We think of NHS workers
and ask that they not be overwhelmed this cold and flu season.

We think of the bereaved
and ask that your light shine on the good memories,
so that grief does not overwhelm.

Help us to get through this winter together.

Amen.

**By the Revd Angela Rigby, minister serving Christ Church URC Tonbridge
and St Johns Hill URC Sevenoaks**



Have a safe and peaceful Christmas and a blessed New Year