

Christward

The magazine of



September – October
2021

~ From the Editor's Desk ~

I suppose it was inevitable that one day sitting on a Friday morning, the day before the magazine is due out, waiting for the usual miracle where copy suddenly floods into my inbox, I would wait in vain.

Just one article emailed by the most reliable of contributors.

Just two responses to Margaret Garner's request for 'News of the Family' items to be sent to me directly by yesterday evening.

No notifications of future events.

Even the Church Meeting Minutes were sent round by Nicola in advance of Sunday's Meeting so that a reliable banker for two or three pages is cut off.

I was about to write, 'No photos to enable me to pad a thin issue out a little', when David sent me a couple of wonderful photos (see below)

So what am I left with in addition to the aforementioned four contributions. Well I can raid the Christian Aid web site for information about COP26 events. After that DIY....no prizes for guessing the homophone.

~ Snippets of Hebrew ~

In Psalm 42 King David writes: "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?".

Who or what is asking, "Where is thy God"? Hebrew has a certain amount of redundancy built into the language, which helps to resolve ambiguities. For example words can have a masculine or

feminine ending to match the subject of a sentence. Another element of redundancy is in the pronouns, which are masculine and feminine with variations for plural pronouns, as we have in English.

For nouns there is also a strange kind of plural system. Torah, meaning “instruction”, is a feminine word, but the plural, “instructions” is Torote. Davar is masculine and means “word”, but “words” is Davareem. So it can be seen that “ote” is the feminine plural ending and “eem” is the masculine plural ending. The strange part of this is that the plural form for pairs of things, like eyes and ears, is Ayeem, and it applied to both masculine and feminine pairs.

Verbs and nouns in a sentence must match the Person (first second or third person), Gender (masculine or feminine) and Number (plural dual or singular). This is often very useful in clearing up any ambiguity.

Back to the Psalm, verse 3. “My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?” Grammatically the related words in the verse reveal:-

“My weeping” (noun singular feminine, yes weeping is a noun in Hebrew!) the pronominal element is 1st person common gender and singular as applied to singular nouns (Nouns which are plural have a different form of the pronominal suffix). So “*my weeping*” is beyond doubt a singular pronoun with a singular noun.

“Meat” (noun masc.) bread, food or sustenance.

“Continuously” (noun masc.) literally “all the day” which is an idiom for continually.

“Say” (verb infinitive form, perfect tense and probably means to “say continuously”, not just once) but has a wide range of meaning including to say, utter, speak, think and to intend. The use of the infinitive in conjunction with the expression “all the day” suggests the translators got this right. Although in English I think “all day” might convey a little more of the weariness of it.

“They” is a pronoun which would normally be indicated by a plural pronominal suffix to the verb “say”, but no such suffix is found in the infinitive form.

David makes it clear that there is a Voice which asks “Where is your God?”. Whose voice is it? Grammatically there is nothing to indicate the origin of the voice. David is singular, and the weeping or tears are singular, and so the translation “they continually say to me ...” is an interpretation. The use of “They”, suggests other people. But “my weeping” is singular.

Incidentally at the end of this Psalm he talks about his enemies, but the word enemies is not what the original says. It is a word that means “cramped”, which I suggest is referring to his emotional distress. The Psalm does not have any enemies or adversaries.

His emotions and his tears *are* his prayer. His tears say to him, Where is your God?

Water symbolised chaos in the creation account, and David’s prayer is for God to bring order to transform his own chaos. To turn his tears into joy.

This is a love poem, written for all who suffer. It is an expression of compassion understanding and empathy from the heart.

Geoff Walker

~ News of the Family and the Wider Union Chapel Community September 2021 ~

Congratulations to **Jonathan Roberts** who has been awarded an MSc with Distinction in History of Science, Medicine and Technology. He has now started his PhD in Extinction Studies at Leeds.

Members who knew **Charlotte Abbas** will be sorry to hear about her death in August.



She had worked as a volunteer with ASSIST (Neighbourhood Care Group) since the 1990s and was much loved by all the people she helped and worked with.

A keen cyclist, Charlotte, was very involved with the Fallowfield Loop, which meets bi-monthly in the Chapel, thanks to Eileen Land. She had an allotment and was very generous with its produce - our soup will much miss her Jerusalem artichokes.

Last week I joined family and friends to plant a beech tree in her memory in Hough End Fields opposite where she lived - a lovely way to remember her.

We were sorry to learn of the death of **Heather Dancy (née Wray)** last month. She came to Union Chapel whilst she was a student in the 1970s and will be much missed by her family and friends.

~ The struggle for survival ~

Oak and Red Clover defy all attempts to eliminate them as they burst through the waste land of the Linton House site.



David Garner

~ Christian Aid and COP26 ~

Christian Aid is involved in many activities associated with Climate Justice at COP26. Their website details a wide range of activities that people can get involved with. For Instance

Global Day of Action

On Saturday 6 November people around the world will take to the streets to march together for climate justice. Will you join and stand in solidarity with those on the front lines of the climate crisis?

Find your local march here: cop26coalition.org/map/

Our sisters and brothers living in the most marginalised communities in the world – who have done the least to cause the climate crisis – are paying the heaviest price.

This year's COP26 climate talks provide a unique opportunity for us to call on the UK Prime Minister and world leaders to take action that will end climate injustice.

Our leaders must:

increase financial support to the world's poorest countries to confront the climate crisis

*take action to limit global temperature rises to 1.5C
take action to stop the expansion of fossil fuel energy and to support clean energy.*

As we take to the streets, we bear witness to the injustice of the climate crisis. As we step out in faith and solidarity, we live out our calling to act justly and love mercy.

Many faith leaders have signed the Glasgow multi-faith declaration for COP26, which says 'faith communities are united in caring for human life and the natural world. We share a belief in a hopeful future, as well as an obligation to be responsible in caring for our common home, the Earth.'

Join faith communities around the world on Saturday November 6 to ensure leaders hear our calls for a more equitable world loud and clear.

Much more information on how to get involved can be found at

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/climate-justice-every-moment-matters>

~ Time for a Breather? ~

I confess that my heart sank a little when I saw the Agenda for Sunday's Church Meeting. Several of the items have the potential to spark off very long discussions and we are off to Somerset in the afternoon. Hang on, I thought, at a Church Meeting you just turn up, talk sometimes and then when the Meeting is over, however long it takes, that's it. Pity the poor Deacons who've been through it all once, perhaps more than once, before it gets to us. No doubt their Meetings go on and on as they try to balance their own individual views and take into account ours as well. We seem, like jugglers, to have so many balls in the air at the same time. So many things requiring action and so few of us to act. In a time of pandemic when many of us feel vulnerable and fearful there are even fewer than normal able or prepared to get involved.

Suddenly I hear the voice of Private Fraser in Dad's Army 'We're doomed'. Just as suddenly David produces two great photographs showing an oak sapling and some red clover bursting through the decidedly inhospitable ground of the Linton House site. Despite the fact that the long term future of the oak and clover is ropery to say the least, perhaps it is time to be a bit more optimistic.

It is true that there are many things to discuss and decide - the future of the Linton House site, the return to the Chapel, Worship at Union Chapel post COVID, how to manage the Lettings, whether to call a minister, maintenance of the buildings, pensions, how to organise pastoral care..... but perhaps we should take a breather and give ourselves a bit of space and not try to deal with everything at the same time. Would it be possible to try and work out which things require our urgent attention and which things can be put on the back burner for now. For example

The use of the Linton House Site

I realise that we are in discussions with GM Commoners and we are inviting them to the next Church picnic but could we say that we are putting any future discussions on hold for 12 months while we deal with other matters?

Worship at Union Chapel post COVID and the Return to Chapel

We accepted a fairly detailed scheme for Worship after COVID during July. In the light of developments in the pandemic, and the survey of members' views on the return to Chapel, the scheme was modified. The church accepted an alternating Zoom/Blended scheme in September with a review at Christmas. There have been technical problems which we need to try and sort out. Perhaps now we could give ourselves a break from future discussions on the worship and the return to chapel until say Easter. By then things concerning the pandemic might be clearer and ideas concerning worship can be considered with a refreshed mind.

Pensions and Calling a Minister

My understanding from Gwyneth's report is that this is one of the items which we cannot put off because of financial and charity considerations so we have to decide now.

And so one could go on through the list assigning a priority status to each of the matters which concern us. If we did this, and put off some items for a while, the church and the Deacons might be

faced with shorter agendas and meetings. Although, as far as Union Chapel is concerned, there is no guarantee.


There are also other concerns which we need to address particularly the very heavy load that some people are bearing on behalf of us all and which in the long term is unsustainable. Perhaps a greater transparency and understanding are needed into what has to be done in order for a small church to fulfil our expectations.

Alan Redhouse

Christward Number 512. Published 5th September 2021
The magazine of Union Chapel Fallowfield(Baptist),
2b Wellington Road, Fallowfield Manchester, M14 6EQ

Web Site: www.unionchapelbaptist.org.uk

Church Office:  225-4226

Editor: Alan Redhouse:  445-0020;
email: alan.redhouse@virgin.net

Secretary: Nicola Hamilton  270 0087

Treasurer: David Garner  434 4984

Deacons: David Garner, Nicola Hamilton, Andy Howes, Lorna Richardson, Steve Roberts.