

# Christward

The magazine of



January 8<sup>th</sup>–February 26<sup>th</sup>  
2017

**~ January 2017**

## **From the Secretary's Heaps of Paper ~**

As is conventional at this season, I'll start by wishing a happy New Year to all our readers. I hope it will be a calmer and more peaceful one in nearly every way than the last year was. We start the New Year with hopes and apprehensions, wanting to be grateful for the good things and strong enough to cope with the bad ones, aware that the year will bring many things we can't foresee at this stage.

However, we're told that these days, that's not enough. We must have Plans, Goals and Visions. I'm suspicious of all of these, partly because experience has taught me that the world does not bend to my will, but also because some of the best things that happen in life are the unexpected ones. The one I'm most suspicious of is Visions. (Brexit hasn't helped here – some people's slogans and visions of a new Great Britain seem to have descended very rapidly into a nightmare of muddle and uncertainty, but you may see that differently.)

To say that someone has a Vision or a Mission Statement in a corporate context is something we find easy to take with a large pinch of salt. We are all used to the sight of bored, underpaid and overqualified café staff standing by signs which tell us they are passionate about their work and really care what we think about their coffee. But in a church context, Vision seems to have an objective status which commands respect. Not to share someone's vision can feel like a personal slight, or evidence of your own lack of faith. "My Vision for X" sounds so much grander and deeper than "I've had an idea about X" – but does it actually mean anything more?

I think in the coming months we as a congregation may have to get used to dealing with people who express themselves differently from us, and we need to beware of thinking that our way of doing and saying things means we are somehow less spiritual or less

capable than others. A number of us have spent time in years gone by in churches where some people spoke as if they had a hotline to God in a way that others don't, and we are still vulnerable to feeling that we should fit in with their superior insight. But if someone else's vision is your nightmare, your view is as valid as theirs is.

A grand scheme with no financial plan is not a vision. It's a daydream. Asking for more detail is not evidence of cynicism. There is nothing faithful about setting off on a journey ill-prepared. A vision doesn't have to be a single grand project. An aim of sustaining a diverse church community doing different things to the best of the differing talents of those involved is a vision. You could say this is the vision Union Chapel has lived by for years.

In my line of work I'm very used to hearing the cry "It's Urgent!" Sometimes it is. Usually it shouldn't be, but often someone has decided to impose a deadline into which ego becomes invested, and suddenly speed becomes more important than thoroughness. There is something akin to a moral imperative about urgency. You can't do it for then? Why not? Fred in the City Centre could. What are you, some sort of weakling? The deadline develops a life of its own. A desire to slow down is reprehensible. Nobody wants to be blamed for delay.

It's a standing joke at Union Chapel that as a church we are slow to make decisions. It's also fair to say that we tend not to regret those decisions when we have made them. Taking time to think things through, to pray, to contemplate, to listen to each other, is a good thing, not a weakness. I'm not advocating denial or procrastination. Sometimes it is only by eliminating alternatives that a plan emerges. There will be times when decisions are needed, and we should try to be as well-informed and focussed as we can when those times come. But there's no need to be pushed into precipitate action. Let's be convinced before we decide we have an urgent need to follow a vision!

*Gwyneth*

## **~ Fallowfield & Withington Food Bank ~**

It's been a busy few months at the Foodbank and it doesn't look like it will be any quieter going forward.

Our supermarket collections during December at both Tesco & Sainsbury's were a huge success. A huge thankyou to everyone who helped in any way. Our warehouse is currently well stocked but given the numbers of people attending foodbank sessions we will need to ensure that there are continued donations. Watch this space for dates of upcoming collections.

The main highlight of the last few months was the filming of our session at St. Cuthbert's and an interview with one of our clients. Two days of filming resulted in around 10 minutes shown on BBC One in early December. We have a copy of the programme which will be shown in a second session next month.



On Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January 7pm in Union Chapel we shall be holding an event "Valuing Volunteers-Celebrating Communities" during which we will highlight the work our volunteers do and recognise the huge contribution made by the local community in supporting us. We would very much like members of Union Chapel to join us. Please let Colin know if you can attend.

On Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January at 7.00pm in St. Paul's Church Hall there will be a community screening of "I Daniel Blake" to which you are all invited.

## Free Your Voice

7pm Friday 27th January  
St Paul's church hall  
491 Wilmslow Road, Withington  
M20 4AW



### An evening of sharing

Art



Stories



Poems



### Free Screening of

Donations  
Welcome



Let Annelie know if you're coming

[annelie.leinhos@larche.org.uk](mailto:annelie.leinhos@larche.org.uk)

01614455710

Supported by:



We have welcomed several new members to the foodbank team recently and have also said a fond goodbye to Rosie Roberts who has secured full time employment. Rosie has contributed a great deal to the life of our foodbank in recent months and we wish her well.

*Colin*

## **~ A Pile of Books ~**

You can almost guarantee that in every church service in the land on Christmas Day the service leader will ask the children “What presents did you get for Christmas?” Why are the adults in the congregation never asked. The standard answer is because “It is the children’s day.” However it could also be because answers such as ‘a shirt & socks, a toolbox, a boxed set of Happy Valley: Series Two dvds’ will not compare with ‘a radio controlled F1 car, a Lego kit to build Jurassic Park or an annual pass to Alton Towers’. So as I was not asked on the Day I give my answer now, ‘a pile of books’ and they compare favourably with any computerised toy.

Despite my appeals for articles to print in Christward none have appeared and there is only 48 hours to publication so I claim editorial privilege to talk at some length about my Christmas presents. Next January some articles might appear to prevent such indulgence occurring again, or I might be asked in the service, or more probably the Editor will have been replaced

With one exception the books in my pile are non-fiction. Margaret normally has a pile of novels so if I want some fiction I plunder her stock. I am a ‘snapper-up of unconsidered trifles’ in the line of facts, ideas, stories about real people and events. These days one problem is that, with failing memory, I’m not likely to remember any of the trifles found in the books once I put them down. Sometimes I even forget them while I’m reading the book. That is not, however, the main problem which confronts me when I look at the pile of books. No, it is which one do I read first? Over the years I have

developed a strategy to deal with this problem. I read the introduction and first chapter of each book in turn and then make my decision.

The first book in the pile offers up this trifle in the introduction We've always considered *Homo sapiens* (us) and *Homo neanderthalensis* to be separate species that coexisted for thousands of years in Europe until the superior *sapiens* finally won out. (two species are considered as distinct when they are incapable of producing fertile offspring together) We use the term *neanderthal*, quite unfairly, to describe a brutish person. However we now know that most Europeans have about 2.7% neanderthal DNA in their genome. So the two so-called species must have had sex together and produced viable offspring. So under the accepted definition not separate species but our cousins. Indeed it looks as though the male neanderthals....Stop move on to the next book.

Now this one tells me something which has been obvious since I was at school namely that the shapes of West Africa and SouthAmerica seem to fit together. The theory is that the lands once joined having been moving apart for millions of years. The question is at what rate? The answer according to the book is they get further apart by 2.5 cm per year. That is the two continents are now almost 2 metres further apart than on the day that I was born. If you wanted to you could check this out. Take one GPS device to Brazil and another to North West Africa and check how they move relative to each other over few years. (If you've got the money you will get a more accurate result with a couple of radio telescopes and a galaxy several billion miles away) Assuming the continents have been moving apart at more or less the same rate since the separation started then Africa and America were joined together about 160 million years ago. Now that for me is a really considerable trifle but I must press on.

Up next is a book about Christianity and the afterlife. The view I was brought up with was that at the moment of death my soul was destined, after resurrection and judgement, either for paradise or for hell or perhaps a long wait in purgatory, a place of suffering, until

my sins had been expiated. That doesn't seem to be the view of many 2nd century Christians; for them the individual was much less important. Those Christians awaited nothing less than the re-creation of the entire universe. Although martyrs had the privilege of direct entry into heaven the rest of us would await that final act of re-creation. That period of waiting however was not a place of suffering like purgatory but a place of repose and refreshment. By the 7th century this view had lost out in Western Christianity to a view of an individual soul immediately bound for heaven after death. Of course if I were to read on I'm sure I'll find money has something to do with this triumph but time for the next book.

We are all composed of trillions of cells, brain cells, liver cells. bone cells etc but we carry around with us in our gut ,on our skin, in every crevice of our bodies, many more cells than the trillions which make up our bodies. All these guests are related to us as we share a common ancestor, we store information using DNA, and the chemical we use to provide us with energy is exactly the same. But it is not only humans that play host to these trillions of microbes but every animal does. Now although I'm ready to be fascinated by this microbial world, reading about those in my mouth and under my arm pits I am not, so soon after Christmas, ready to explore the bacterial world residing around my anus. I'll quickly pass on to the next book in the pile.

I do like a book that starts something like 'One Saturday morning in the summer of 2013, two British government intelligence officials called at the offices of the *Guardian* in London.....' I know that such a book will be filled with stories about the society we live in, the governments we live under and a whole world of secrets. But is there a need for secrecy in government? Do we British live in a culture of secrecy any different from any other nation? Important questions but I sense that it is the stories that I will find intriguing - 'in 1953 Churchill wrote to his Colonial Secretary suggesting it was time to ask for US assistance in toppling the democratically elected government of British Guiana.' What an interesting snippet. The thought occurs to me that if there were no secrets then there would



be no spies. If there were no spies there would be no spy stories. This brings me to the last book in the pile.

A memoir so full of stories. The writer is drawn to men and women of power because he wants to know what makes them tick. In the memoir he won't tell us about his work for British intelligence, performed mostly in Germany.... because he is bound by vestiges of old fashioned loyalty to his former Services. It is certain, without reading beyond the Introduction, that I'll get loads of stories that will throw light on the experiences that were transformed into the novels

of the greatest writer of spy fiction of the twentieth century. 😊

So that's it. Time to make a choice and I have narrowed it down to two. By the time you read this I'll be reading one of them.

*Alan Redhouse*

P.S. If you want to know the titles of any of the books mentioned above just ask me. If you want to borrow any of them then you will have to wait a while. I'm a slow reader but I should have finished them by June after all that's when my pile of Birthday books is due to arrive.

## **~ News of the Family ~**

We were sad to hear of the death of **Elena Thorpe**. It was good to have her worshipping with us in the weeks before she was taken into hospital on 24th December. We remember the bravery with which she faced her illness and the joy she brought to those who knew her. We hold Peter, Christian and partner Matt, and Peter's parents Bill and Shirley in our minds at this time. Elena's funeral will be held on Friday 13th January and the arrangements are as follows:

1.00pm for 1.15pm Southern Cemetery (Barlow Moor Road Entrance) for burial

- 2.15pm Service at Union Chapel Fallowfield to celebrate Elena's life  
3.45pm Shared conversation over food and drink.

Family request colourful clothing.

*Further details can be obtained from David & Margaret Garner*

**Rosie Roberts** will be leaving Manchester shortly for Birmingham to take up a job there. We wish Rosie all the best as the world of work beckons.

## **~ Minutes of the Church Meeting of Union Chapel Fallowfield (Baptist) held on Sunday 20th November 2016 at 11.20am.~**

**Present:** M Garner (Chair), G Heritage Roberts, E Welford, M Edmonds M Welford, L Earnshaw, M Janes, N Hamilton, A Howes, L Richardson, G Mattock, E Thorpe, O Roberts, G Walker, O Jones, E Land, T Land, C Bowden, S Roberts..

**Apologies:** D Garner , C Walker (Children); C Marchbank-Smith (Food Bank Meeting); A & M Redhouse.

Minutes of the two previous meetings (Sept, Oct) approved.

No **AOB** notified

### **Interim Minister/Moderator**

Gwyneth outlined the position – Jane Henderson had been suggested to us as a potential “interim minister” as an alternative to a traditional moderator. She had met a few of the Deacons, and with the congregation at last week's Second Session where the

potential role had been discussed. We were awaiting clarification as how the role might interact with the need for Jane to become ordained and meet the Newly Accredited Ministers requirements of the BU – Phil Jump yet to reply.

The potential appointment was discussed openly and thoughtfully.

It was generally agreed that Jane had potentially a good deal to offer the Church, but that we didn't have enough information as to what arrangements were possible to make any firm commitment.

It was agreed that we should carry on exploring the possibilities. It was further agreed that Jane be asked to lead a Sunday when possible; that Gwyneth seeks further clarification from the Regional Minister as to what would be possible by way of structure. If Jane does any work for the Church in the meantime she should be paid pro rata.

**Secretary:** In the discussion above the issue of support for the Secretary was raised, It was unanimously agreed that the Gwyneth had the full trust and support of the members

**Fabric:** Agreed to proceed with the purchase of a retractable projector screen for the Small Hall. Cost c£600

**Lettings Committee:** Agreed that Michael's nominee be invited to join the committee.

**Linton House:** Still working to handover date of early Feb. May be some compromise on boarding up. Despite the surveyors reports on the condition there is still interest from another charitable group to use the building. Agreed we should continue discussions. For further details see Michael. This would be on the basis that they took on all the legal and management responsibilities for the building and operation. Progress is being made on recording some of the history – any material to Steve R.

**Pastoral Work:** The deacons will attempt to maintain a pastoral oversight. To facilitate this the congregation list has been apportioned amongst the deacons who each will keep a particular

look out for a named list of people. See Gwyneth if you want to know whose list you are on!

**Chairs:** Agreed to repairs to upholstery. Margaret E to organise, agree material and colours etc – with our thanks.

**Worship:** The experiment with an alternative format as detailed in the magazine will go ahead, no objections have been received. Comments to or further details and offers of help to Steve R or any member of the worship team.

**Christmas Card:** Andy H will compose and organise – with our thanks.

**Open Tuesday:** Newsletter available for distribution – see Andy H.

**DONM:** 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 2017

**Meeting closed** with a Gloria at 12:14.

## **~ Talking to Each Other ~**

If you would like to comment on any of the articles in this magazine and so start a discussion or if you would care to write an article for us on a topic of your choosing such contributions would be welcome. Please send them by email to [alan.redhouse@virgin.net](mailto:alan.redhouse@virgin.net) or by post to The Editor, Christward, Union Chapel Fallowfield, 2b Wellington Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6EQ.

*Alan Redhouse*

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