

Christward

The magazine of



March 6th–April 24th
2016

~ From the Minister's Desk ~

The glitz and glamour of this year's Brit Awards has just finished, and Adele's beaming face is splashed all over the papers after her record haul of four awards in one year. I was fascinated to hear that the first Brit Awards in 1977 were only supposed to be a one-off, in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. It was a relatively quiet affair hosted by Michael Aspel and held in the Wembley Conference Centre, London. Five years passed before another ceremony was scheduled, but since then it has grown astronomically year on year.

If you haven't heard of Adele and her latest album '25' then I can commend it. I haven't actually heard Adele sing the songs very often, but I am very familiar with the album through the belting voice of my daughter as she performs impromptu concerts in her bedroom or inadvertently serenades me as she listens on headphones in the back of the car. She is rather good, but you might not want to mention this to her (she never reads Dad's boring magazine articles). I like to imagine that, whatever our natural musical ability, we all occasionally find ourselves in similar situations – or if not, perhaps we should! All this reminds me that music and singing are not only big business, but a fundamental part of our humanity.

Some of us recently attended Jan Berry's launch of a small book entitled *Re-thinking Worship?* Now it must be said that worship is not limited to musical forms, but it is often the predominant way that churches use to express their faith corporately. There are many good reasons for this. Words can be powerful, but words combined with melody even more so. They stick in our minds (which is sometimes frustrating), we remember them (often permanently), and they create strong memories and associations (which makes them a potent therapeutic medium). The singing of words also has the potential to carry stronger emotion and create deeper meaning. I recall that John Bell, of Iona fame, had a very simple example of this. He would find someone in the audience of one of his

workshops whose birthday it was, stand them up and recite (rather deadpan) the words 'Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday dear ... , happy birthday to you.' It always struck everyone as not only a bit weird, but rather empty and formless. Of course John would then invite the rest of the gathering to sing the same words to the universally-known tune, and the slightly embarrassed recipient would be all smiles as they received the hearty goodwill of those gathered.

I also observe other times where words alone struggle to cope. Spoken liturgy remains precious and can work very powerfully, but seems to be best suited to single voices contributing to an unfolding script, when we can appreciate the diversity in age, gender, accent, and even new nuances of expression and emphasis. When we read things together, not only are these subtleties lost, but even worse, I often note that the resulting mix of individual voices makes us all sound bored and miserable! We're not (I assume, from facial expressions), but the muddled combination of vocals just seems to sound that way. Music gives us the vocal choreography we all need to express ourselves as one.

We might be convinced about the music and singing, but there remains this strange word; 'worship'. A traditional understanding is that it is derived from 'worth-ship', which is the activity of acknowledging and giving worth to God. The difficulty is that this understanding is linked to the assumption that God is a divine being in a hierarchical structure and that we, as lowly humans, have an obligation to pay homage. Or that God enjoys being praised and therefore we should be seeking to please God. For many, these kinds of understanding do not ring true, and therefore 'worship' means something very different.

One of Jan's proposals that particularly struck me was that worship is all about *connecting*. It should connect us with whatever we understand as divine (we might use the word 'God', or other ways of describing a sense of mystery and presence), it should connect us with what's going on within ourselves (hopes, fears, dreams, anxieties, longings), and it should connect us with the world around

us (relationships with others, social and global issues). It is not that this connection is not there already, but good worship will re-sensitise us to that interconnectedness, and perhaps by doing so will change the way we live. Perhaps an alternative word for 'worship' might be 'connecting'?

Whether we find the right word or not, it is important that we are clear about why we are doing it. To an extent this is personal and each person finds value and meaning in different ways, but there might also be things we can think about together which could help. For example; for a long time, hymnbooks have included topical indexes, so it's easy to pick songs about 'forgiveness' or 'justice' or 'love' and so on. It seems increasingly important however that we recognise and differentiate hymns in other ways as well. What if we paid more attention to genre and purpose, through which we could identify our role as singers? Some hymns re-tell stories, either traditionally or with new twists, and we sing them as narrators. Some use the language of anger and frustration, and we sing them as protestors. Some are raw and emotive, and we sing to empathise and make ourselves vulnerable to the pain of others. Some are full of questions and doubts, and we sing them as honest journeyers. Some are beautiful and poetic and evocative, and we sing them as small human beings who exist in a universe of wonder. These distinctions, and variety, are important if we are to make the most of the power of sung expression.

Nick Page authored a book some years ago about worship entitled *And Now Let's Move into a Time of Nonsense*. It's probably not our kind of book, but I do love the title. Some of what we do in church will always seem a little strange to people, particularly our hymns, and I don't think that is necessarily a problem. But we do need to be sure of why we sing, be confident that what we sing truly reflects our identity and faith, and above all else ensure that we are not participating in nonsense!

Ian Geere

~ More Hebrew! ~

Having started to learn Hebrew nearly two years ago, one of our sons, Peter, has also started to learn Hebrew. It makes quite a change for me to know more about a language than he does. But I expect that will soon change!

I have been attending a Hebrew reading group for several months now and it is beginning to feel as if the language is showing signs of settling into my brain. I can read it reasonably well, albeit a little slowly, but my vocabulary still is not very large. So that involves looking up a lot of words.

The general reaction I find is that most people's objection to learning Hebrew is the strange alphabet characters. They are very strange indeed, but at least there are only 22 of them!

But there are rewards of course! The way the language constructs its poetry, and uses words with similar letters in them to link different themes, means the translation can be a little different to what it might be if one were to just render the meaning of the words as they would be found in a Lexicon.

Bearing in mind that most words consist of three letters, with prefixes and suffixes added as appropriate, it is surprising that there are sometimes three different Hebrew words for the same thing. God said to Abraham in Genesis 13 that whoever blessed his descendants, God would bless, and whoever cursed them, God would curse. The word for bless, is the same for when men bless them, as when God will bless those who bless them. (I know it's a bit complicated, but you will get it if you read it again!). In contrast the word for curse is different when used of men than when used of God. Strangely, the word for curse which describes God's cursing of those who curse Abraham's descendants, contains two letters which on their own mean light.

This may have something to do with future writings in Isaiah where God calls Israel a light unto the Gentiles.

Geoff Walker

~ Christian Aid week this year is 15th to 21st May ~

For Union Chapel that means CAKES galore!

The hope is to have cakes in the kitchen for all our many users to enjoy during their break from activities, in exchange for a donation into the Christian Aid box.

Below is a story from the Christian Aid website, showing the sort of situations any donations will help to fund....

Meet our neighbour Morsheda



“Morsheda is a young mother of four living in Bangladesh. She has no land, few assets and no savings.

For Morsheda’s family living on low-lying islands in the Brahmaputra River, floods are a terrifying part of everyday life. Morsheda can’t even count on having a safe place to call home: the single-room, corrugated-iron house she shares with her children has been flooded four times.

‘I feel very scared of the river. When I look at it I keep thinking “it is coming”.’

Dangers all around

One year, her humble house filled up to her knees with floodwater. To stay dry, and keep away from the dangerous snakes that now swam through her home she raised her bed up on bricks. But during the night she was woken by a loud splash. In the pitch black, her baby son had fallen into the inky water. He could have drowned in moments.

Race against time

In a bad year, huge waves crashed against her house, giving her less than an hour to uproot her home and scramble to safety. Racing against time, she gathered her terrified children together and hastily made a raft from a banana tree.

At any moment, it could have tipped and plunged them into the swirling waters, but it was their only hope. She put her youngest daughter in a cooking pot and clung to it as it floated in the current.

‘My children were so scared. My sister was holding them very tightly and we were panicking because my neighbour’s child was washed away.’

The floods are coming

Morsheda and her children live a precarious life. They know that the floods will come again, and soon. But we can lift our neighbours like Morsheda to safety.

Just £250 is enough for a Christian Aid Home Safety Package. It could flood-proof Morsheda’s home, raising it eight foot on an earth plinth, so that she has a safe place to rebuild, keep livestock and grow crops. It could also buy a goat, seeds and a wormery to help produce compost – all of which will give her a long-term income and a solid foundation for a new life.

‘If I could raise my house then I would feel much safer living here with my children.’

So, back to Union Chapel ...

If any kind people reading this feel inclined to bake for a particular day during that week, please get in touch with me and I'll try to ensure all days are plentiful and tasty!

*Please email **cgwalker100@gmail.com** or leave a note for me in the Office with your contact details and I'll contact you.*

With thanks in anticipation!

Carole Walker

~ Poverty Action Sunday 3 1st January ~

The Sunday All Age Service on Poverty Action Sunday was the first service the Junior Church young people have organised with everyone taking part. The congregation produced some poems on POVERTY, here are a few:

**Nothing to Eat
Nowhere to Live
No clothes to wear
No one to care
What should we do?
It's our call to share.**

Possibilities are endless in an equal world.

Offering your help can change lives.

Violence will help no one.

Education should be open to everyone.

Responding to cries of need should be a priority.

Today millions of people die.

You can help them.

The old man sat in the street
He looked 90
He was 40
He was hungry
He was ill
Did we help?
Poverty in Manchester

Poor people die of diseases
Over 70% of Africa are dying.
Very little to eat
Everybody can fit poverty
Reducing poverty can save lives
Teamwork is everyone's aim
You can change it all.

In other countries poverty is really bad.
But we only see it on TV so we switch it off.
Which is really **SAD!**

Plusiers personnes meurts dans le monde aujourd'hui de
malnutrition, de malaria, de fame tout ceci à Course de la pauvreté.
Alors sommes-nous avengle a ce point? Pourquoi certain vivent
dans l'opulence et d'autre dans la galère?
Pourquoi cette injustice?
Sommes-nous tous les fils d'un même Dieu?
Oui nous le sommes offrons, partageons, éliminons, pour reduire ce
fliam.

Translation

Many people in the world die today because of malnutrition,
malaria, hunger; all this because of poverty.
So are we blind to that point?
Why do some people live in opulence and some in poverty?
Why this injustice?
Are we not sons of the same God?
Yes we are.
Offering, sharing, eliminating injustice
Let us together put a stop to this tsunami.

~ Fallowfield & Withington Food Bank ~

The numbers attending the Food Bank sessions remains high and presently we have an urgent need for the following donations.

Tinned Tomatoes, sponge puddings, custard, rice, and coffee.

We are extremely pleased that Sainsbury's Local in Withington donated £500 worth of food and our thanks go to one of our Volunteers Aaron who works there for arranging the donation and ensuring it was all loaded in to vehicles for transportation.

Holy Trinity Platt are collecting on a monthly basis and we appreciate all their support. Another food collection will take place at Heald Place Primary School Rusholme in mid March the children enjoyed taking part in the Harvest Collection and have asked to help again.

On February 22nd we received our first donation from Food Cloud in partnership with Tesco Burnage. This wonderful initiative will enable us to offer fresh fruit, veg and bread at each of our Food Bank sessions. We are indebted to the team at Tesco Burnage who work so hard on our behalf.

We now have the date for the next Tesco Collection which will take place on Thursday June 30th between 8am and 10pm and Friday 1st July between 8am and 2pm at Tesco Burnage. On Sunday 3rd July at 12.30 we shall weigh, sort and date the food at Withington Methodist Church please put these important dates in your diary and if you can help please do let me know.

We have a good number of dedicated volunteers at each of our Food Bank sessions, they give so freely of their time, and we appreciate their compassion and understanding often in distressing circumstances . We couldn't do it without them.

Colin Marchbank Smith

~ Remembering ~

Many older members of the church will remember Vally Krug who lived next door to the Union Chapel manse in Wellington Road. Vally was good neighbour to three of our former ministers John Nicholson, David Jones and Eric Bray. Vally died last year and below is an obituary of three of her friends.

We first met Vally at Alan Sennett's course 'Social & Political Issues' which was held at Union Chapel and was a lively discussion group covering a wide range of subjects.

Vally was born on 11th January 1919 in Brno Czechoslovakia, into a well educated well off Jewish family. She was the second child of Heinrich & Rosa Stern and younger sister to Felix her beloved brother.

She came to England just before the second World War on a 'domestic service visa' which meant that she could only work in that capacity. However it saved her life as the rest of her family back in Eastern Europe all perished under the Nazi occupation.

Domestic service in both Disley and Cumbria was not easy for Vally but after four years as servant she met her future husband, Paul Krug, at the Czech Club in Manchester and her life changed. She trained as a nutritionalist and taught adults at a college in Manchester. She spoke four languages English, Czech, German and French and had a great thirst for knowledge ranging from Science to Medieval Art.

Vally corresponded weekly with her daughter, who now lives in Switzerland, and was still visiting her in that country when she was 88. When she could no longer attend the class at Union Chapel a group of us met once a week at her house for discussion. She had a very positive outlook and personality, thankful to have survived the war, grateful to her new country and the wonderful care she received from the Health Service, especially in the last year of her life

Vally will be missed by her wide range of friends. She was a truly remarkable woman.

Alison, Liz & Diana.

~ Thoughts on Union Chapel - Fallowfield ~

As a fellow Christian and a Roman Catholic I find Union Chapel a place that expresses God's love. It is a place of meeting, sharing and acceptance. The members of the church open up their buildings and facilities, and make available their organisational skills and their faith to everyone. They embrace all people regardless of race, creed or social background.

Here, all are made welcome. There are classes that develop thinking, creativity, general well being and that build up self confidence encouraging pleasure in one another's company.

God's love is experienced here both through individuals, one to one, in their own various groups and through the open-hearted and caring attitude of the church.

Union Chapel is a wonderful witness of God's love for us and follows Jesus' own example of showing 'The Way' to find inner peace, love of self, love our fellow human beings and ultimately love of God.

May God bless Union Chapel and the work done here. May He continue to send helpers, leaders, finances and wisdom, and continue to pour out his divine love and protection on this special place.

Elizabeth Rodway, Manchester Music Makers, Viola.

~ The Enemy ~

Between the two World Wars Union Chapel had a very active Peace Group. Stella & Frank Sykes, Olga Heath, Ethel Biggs and Frank Ward, people who are still remembered by members of our congregation, were all members of the Group. One of the Peace Group activities was to present plays.

In November 1937 they presented the play entitled 'The Enemy' which was by, the now largely forgotten American playwright, Channing Pollock who was a theatrical polemicist with a great sense of moral urgency. The play written in 1926 is set in Vienna from 1914 to 1919, 'The Enemy' presents two families, the Behrends and the Arndts; Carl Behrends is a, young playwright in love with Pauli Arndt, the daughter of wise old Professor Arndt, whose pacifistic views infuriate Carl's profiteering father. Pollock tells a familiar story of young love, separation, heartbreak, courage, and hope with the innovation that the story takes place on the Austro-Hungarian side of the battle lines. To these people, as for the Allies, this was also a holy war for freedom; the "enemy" represented to them the same brutality, aggressiveness, and cruelty that it had for the other side. In the last act, when the war is over and Carl has been killed in battle, Pauli's baby has died of malnutrition and the profiteer Behrends has been awarded a gold medal for "services to the nation", the playwright's message is clear: "Victory" is as meaningless as "defeat". As the Austrian and English soldiers shake hands outside, Pauli says: "We're all pacifists now, especially the returned soldiers."

The Peace Group's programme for the play informs audience members that 'the actual birthday cake displayed in the first act may be purchased at 2d per portion during the interval'. Also in the programme in bold letters was:

You have been entertained by this play!
Did it make you think?
Did the last war end war for you?

Unfortunately in 1937 Union Chapel was a very different place from what it is now and the powers that be were not even entertained let alone made to think. The play was taken off!

(I am grateful to Eileen Land for a copy of the programme and the information about the end of the play's run.)

Alan Redhouse

~ News of the Family ~

Many congratulations to **Owen Jones and Anna Goodhart** who announced their engagement this month. Owen proposed on top of a little hill in Eskdale with views up to Scafell in the snow and down to the sea and the setting sun. With a backdrop like that it could have come straight from Hollywood. We hope that they both have a long and happy life together

We were sad to learn from **David Cummings** that his wife **Sylvia** has died. David came to Union Chapel when he was appointed a classics master at Manchester Grammar School. Whilst here he married Sylvia and older members of the congregation will remember them both with affection for the contribution they made to the life of the church. We keep David in our minds and prayers at this time.

We understand that **Rachel(née Garner) and Matt Eeckelaers** might soon be returning to Manchester. That is good news for Manchester although obviously a sad loss for London. We look forward to their welcome return.

~ Minutes of the Church Meeting of Union Chapel Fallowfield (Baptist) held on Sunday 17th January 2016 at 11.20am.~

Present: Ian Geere (chair), Gwyneth Heritage Roberts, Andy Howes, Eileen Land, Ted Land, Gwen Mattock, Leonie Earnshaw, Steve Roberts, Jonathan Roberts, Colin Marchbank-Smith, Margaret Garner, Sarah Geere, Carole Walker, Geoff Walker, Nicola Hamilton, David Garner, Brenda Marston, Margaret Redhouse, Alan Redhouse, Irene Roberts, Valentin Ebwe, Rudy Latuperissa, Lorna Richardson

Apologies: Michael Welford, Enid Welford, Rose Bell and Rachel Adebagbo

The Minutes of the November 2015 meeting (in current magazine) were approved.

Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

Notification of AOB for this meeting: None

1. Linton House:

After discussion the following resolution was passed unanimously by the church members present:

“We authorise our trustees the Baptist Union Corporation Limited to accept the offer from the University of Manchester to surrender their lease of Linton House on the terms set out in the letter from Bentley Higgs dated 19th November 2015 (produced to the Meeting), and to enter into a legally binding contract on these terms, with such minor variations as the Deacons may approve.”

2. Looking Ahead:

The Meeting discussed how to make time and space to consider the way forward. The proposal was that on one Sunday every month or thereabouts we have a brief period of worship followed by a longer time for thoughtful consideration of the future, concluding with another period of worship, and that a planning and facilitation Group should be formed from within the church. The Group would be responsible for structuring the discussions and also for following through on points raised. Many people made suggestions, including: Junior Church should be involved if possible; it would be more productive to have proposals to consider than to talk vaguely; a proposal could be made via the Group rather than presented as one person's idea; thoughts from users of the buildings are welcome; we should try to put aside preconceptions about other people's thoughts and hopes and really listen to all suggestions; distributing information in advance enables people to be ready to contribute; setting the discussion in the context of worship is important.

Agreed to give the proposal a try. There was a call for volunteers to join the Group, which is intended will have some rotation of membership. Ian G to convene the first Group meeting.

3. Church Weekend 2016:

It was decided not to have an external speaker, and to form a small working group to plan sessions. Request that David G should not have to carry the full burden of the housekeeping.

4. Spring and Easter plans:

We intend to have Maundy Thursday communion at Union Chapel as usual.

There is a question mark over the Good Friday arrangements as three of the Withington churches held a procession/pilgrimage last year which they intend to repeat, and the timing clashes with our normal joint service with Withington Methodist Church. Ian G and Jane Wild (the minister of WMC) are in discussions with the other local ministers. We may decide to join the procession. Feedback invited.

Once again the clocks go forward in the early hours of Easter Sunday. We will have our Easter Breakfast at 10am followed by the Easter Service at 11am.

5. Christian Aid Week: rather than participate as a church in the door-to-door collections, there is a plan to make and distribute cakes via the church kitchen, inviting consumers to contribute to Christian Aid. Carole W has kindly offered to organise this. Volunteers will be needed to make cakes and get them to church for specific days during Christian Aid Week in early May. Advance baking and freezing of cakes may be possible for some!

The Meeting closed with the singing of Gloria at 12.08pm

Date of Next Regular Meeting: 20th March 2016

~ Dates for the diary ~

Church Week End: 24th - 26th June

Keep the dates free. More details in the next issue of Christward

Rusholme Soup Mcr. Crowd Funding for Rusholme. Wednesday 9th March at Birch Community Centre, Brighton Grove. Doors open at 6.30pm for 7.00pm start. Come along and hear local people pitching for local projects. Suggested min. donation £3, gets you entry, bowl of soup and a vote. Find out more online at: rusholme-soup.squarespace.com

If you've read so far you probably feel like Steve.



So take a rest you've earned it.

~ 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 or by post to The Editor, Christward, Union Chapel Fallowfield, 2b Wellington Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6EQ.

Alan Redhouse

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