

Christward

The magazine of



May 4th–June 27th
2014

~ From the Minister's Desk ~

It is tempting for a minister to conclude that the best thing about Easter is the Bank Holiday Monday! Whilst I suspect that there will always be some truth to that notion, this Easter (along with most others) was actually very enriching. From the Stations and Maundy Thursday service at Withington, to the Good Friday journey of the cross at Union, and then the breakfast communion and celebration on Sunday – we wove a good story together. Yes, we were a bit creative, and yes, there is always the urge to be inventive in the presentation of the ‘same old’ words, but overall I think we allowed space for the story to unfold naturally and powerfully, and that is the abiding memory.

I hope that it was also fruitful over Lent and Easter for us to consider what resurrection means, again picking up on the idea that it was not merely a one-off event, but an ongoing reality. I used a couple of lines of a quote from Christian Wiman (My Bright Abyss) during the Easter service, here is a slightly longer version which provides a little more context:

‘in Christ we live, and move, and have our being.” Paul is trying to get those Athenians—or, more likely, his own early followers—to see the life of Christ as not merely a point in time but as a portal to eternity. He is trying to get them to see what I must see: that Christ’s life is not simply a model for how to live, but the living truth of my own existence. Christ is not alive now because he rose from the dead two thousand years ago. He rose from the dead two thousand years ago because he is alive right now.’

And so as Easter fades, we are perhaps left with the ongoing challenge to discover the resurrected Christ in our own lives, in the lives of others, and in the world around us. I expect that experience might be as strange and diverse as the post-Easter Jesus confusion that the gospel stories indicate, but perhaps as we encounter resurrection for ourselves then the Easter Story might be imbued with even greater meaning.

And of course all of this should not be confined to the individual. I recall again a poem by Lucy Berry that we heard during our narrative communion earlier in Lent. Lucy also trained at NBLC (before my time) and when I heard her reading at a conference I was inspired to get her book 'Trouble with Church?', which I have enjoyed immensely. This was the poem:

As Such, As Yet

Well, obviously, I like your enthusiasm . . .
but I'm not sure we want
(or indeed need)
Resurrection, as such.
Probably nothing quite so extreme.
And anyway, ha-ha,
we're not quite dead. As yet!

No, bit of a strong word, that.
No. I mean, whether or not we still subscribe here
to the notion of the *actual*
resurrection,
what you're saying implies a revamp
of vast proportions,
something really swingeing,
I mean, life-changing, really, doesn't it?

I think we'd settle for a phrase like
resurgence, perhaps, you know?

I mean, we all realise,
to a *man*,
that we need a fair degree of perking up.
And we'd be up, I'm sure,
for *far* more than a facelift.
We're quite clear about that.
Catalytic but not cataclysmic!
Renewal, Emergence, Revivification,
that sort of thing?
A boost you could say.

Oh, we've talked long and hard;
we know it's time to pull our socks up
and it would be splendid if
in the end,
we got some movers and shakers on board.
No one too radical, but you know, keen;
ground-breaking but not undermining,
if you get me.

Well, I'm not sure it's *Salvation* we're
looking at, as such.
We're not quite damned, you know.
Just a little quiet on the community front
as yet.

Engagement would be closer to the mark;
Involvement, Dialogue, Interface, an Empathic Presence,
a Tranquil Resource,
type of thing,
if you get me.

This brings the notion of resurrection to bear on us as gathered church. Perhaps Union Chapel is less afraid of change and upheaval than most, although I suspect we would resonate with the universal truth that we prefer things the way they are (and of course we do love word-play)!

I was reminded of the poem again when I realised that I ought to mention the opening of the Food Bank. In the volunteer training day we organised recently, we were reminded that some of the people we might encounter could be 'difficult'. This is a nice way of saying that they might be angry, or drunk, or aggressive, or emotional – all for good reason. I hope that there is resurrection here. I hope that lives marked by darkness and despair begin their transformation in to light and hope, but I don't expect it to be easy, or common. I hope that the unhelpful instinctive reactions that arise in me can be put to death and that a new and real kind of grace rises up, but I don't expect it to be comfortable.

I also hope that we meet people who are compassionate and humble, bright and wise, insightful and brilliant. People who will challenge and teach us things we cannot yet grasp, who will be unsettling and provocative in painful and helpful ways. I hope that this isn't a fringe thing that is held at arm's length by most of us, but that we find a way to get involved, that we find Christ in it. Not that Christ is any less present in the other things we do, but for those of us who struggle with the theological imaginings of much of what we have been talking about, there is a beautiful simplicity in being food for the hungry, a caring ear for the devalued, and a sliver of hope for those who feel more dead than alive.

Ian Geere

~ The blood of the martyrs...~

A few weeks ago Margaret and I went to London to indulge in a feast of culture - plays, exhibitions, museums etc. Our stay included a visit to the Veronese exhibition at the National Gallery. Now I would not say Veronese is one of my favourite painters. Indeed some of his immense canvases remind me of high art versions of 'Where's Wally?' pictures. However I have always admired the way in which, having been summoned before the Holy Inquisition for filling a canvas entitled the 'The Last Supper' with indecorous figures and buffoons, and ordered to correct the painting, he simply went home and retitled the work 'The Feast in the House of Levi'. That takes some nerve.

In the exhibition there is a huge painting (4.26m x 3.05m) of the Martyrdom of St George. As usual with Veronese the painting is crowded with characters. In the centre at the bottom is the figure of St George ready for his martyrdom. On his left the executioner with his massive sword, on his right a pagan priest tries to get St George to recant and worship the bronze statue of Apollo. Horses, soldiers and others crowd the picture but St George's wonderful face is turned upwards where he alone sees the angel descending with his martyr's crown and above him the Holy Virgin with her Son and St Peter and St Paul waiting to receive him into heavenly bliss.



Standing before the painting I wondered whether I would give up my life for a belief or an idea. I would like to believe that I might be brave enough to risk my life to help save someone in great peril. Perhaps I might be persuaded to risk it to help right some great injustice done to a person or persons, but to lose it for an idea or a belief - I think not. The adages 'He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day' and 'Discretion is the better part of valour' are too deeply written into my DNA.

Galileo recanted his belief in the heliocentricity of the solar system before the Inquisition, saved his skin, went on with his scientific work and, of course, didn't change his mind. Yet there are Christians who would rather lose their lives than run away from their persecutors. There are suicide bombers who believe by giving up

their lives they in some way are being faithful to Islam. What is in the mind of martyr that they would go willingly to death? Why do their fellow believers look upon them as heroes? 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church' writes the early christian author Tertullian. The stories of the martyrs seem to me to be calculated to make many of us feel cowardly and inadequate as far as faith is concerned.

There must be an absolute certainty in the minds of martyrs as to the truth and rightness of their ideas and beliefs in order for them to place adherence to them above life itself. Yet in the twenty first century doubt is an essential element in the faith of many religious people. The questioning keeps us alive to the views and needs of others. It helps us to face change and pursue new and, perhaps, radical solutions to the problems of living in the modern world. If this is so how can martyrs, so convinced of the rightness of their beliefs, be suitable people for us to admire?

Yet when I look at the face of St George and realise what he alone is seeing and what is being offered to one who prizes his faith above all else I do get a sort of feeling of admiration for the man. However all is not lost and I draw some comfort from the fact that Jesus said 'Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' Friends, not ideas or beliefs - even belief in Him.

Alan Redhouse

FABRIC

The Fabric Committee is looking for "new blood"!

If you have knowledge and/or skills in this area we would love to hear from you.

Committee members are usually "hands on" and either tackle jobs themselves or organise contractors.

If you are interested, please contact Ian (07552-788 733) or Eileen (445-7694).

~ At Last ~



Opens on

Friday 9th May at Union Chapel

and on

Tuesday 13th May at St Cuthbert's.

For both distribution centres the opening hours will be between 12.00pm and 2.00pm.

We are still looking for volunteers to help with the Food Bank. If you are interested and would like to know more please contact Colin on 07739571991 for more information.

We are also pleased to accept donations of food for the Food Bank. There is a collection point in the church foyer together with a list of foodstuffs we need (no perishables).

~ News of the Family ~

It was good to have **Michael Welford** back with us. He is making good progress after a spell in hospital with pneumonia.

We send our love and best wishes to **Alan Dobbins** who is receiving treatment at a hospital in Stockport.

We were sad to hear of the death of **Rachel Scott's** father. Rachel has spent some time with her family and is now back in Manchester.

Best wishes to **Sarah Geere** as she starts her new job which we understand will be much closer to home than her last one.

Good luck to **Jonathan Roberts** as he starts a gruelling set of GCSE examinations over the next two months.

~ Boring but necessary? ~

This is the issue of Christward where we publish two sets of Church Meeting Minutes in order that the minutes of last year's AGM can be brought to mind. You could help make next year's May/June issue of the magazine less tedious by writing a riveting article!

The Annual General Church Meeting of Union Chapel will take place after the morning service on Sunday 8th June 2014. Printed below are the minutes of the 2013 AGM for which approval will be sought.

~ Minutes of the Annual General Church Meeting of Union Chapel Fallowfield (Baptist) held on Sunday 19th May 2013 at 11.20am.~

Present: Margaret Garner (chair), Ian Geere, Gwyneth Heritage Roberts, Eileen Land, Ted Land, Sarah Geere, Leonie Earnshaw, Margaret Edmonds, David Garner, Irene Roberts, Harry Fleming,

Rachel Scott, J. Andrea Hood, Steve Roberts, Andy Howes, Lorna Richardson, Rosalind Bell, Beryl Dykes, Nicola Hamilton, Martin Hamilton, Alan Dobbins

Apologies: Alan Redhouse, Margaret Redhouse, Owen Jones, Carmen Bowman (looking after children)

The Minutes of the 2012 AGM (in the current issue of Christward) were approved.

No matters arising or AOB notified.

Election of Deacons: Harry Fleming, David Garner and Eileen Land were all elected to the Diaconate. Thanks to J. H and Martin H for acting as tellers. Thanks to Margaret R as retiring Deacon for her work.

Minister's report: this was done by a slide presentation to mark the events of the last 12 months in the life of our community and to appreciate the things that people pour their energy and devotion into, including:

June 2012 – Church Weekend in Conwy, with Stuart Murray Williams on the theme of multi-voiced church

July – Jiu left us to go home. Jubilee Party and bunting.

August – start of the Meditative Prayer Group

September – Harvest, with the focus on the BMS Thirsty Project. Death of Mair Walch.

October – Halloween Party. Retirement of Richard Kidd from NBLC.

November – Book Group started reading The Great Partnership.

December – Advent Tree of Hope. Christmas!

January 2013 – Singalong with local churches

February – Winter Carnivale (with pancakes), Ceilidh

March – Easter - Egg decorating, Easter gardens, Easter Breakfast.

April – Awayday considering “Why?” questions

May - Christian Aid Week and united service

A special mention for Junior Church – their hard work, creativity and ongoing contribution to the life of the Church.

Overall, a sense of celebration.

The Safeguarding Statement was read out. Safeguarding issues are under ongoing review. We are actively exploring adult safeguarding and trying to put all new rules into practice.

Treasurer's report – Nicola H presented the figures for the year ended March 2013 – summary of account attached.

The fall in income from the previous year is mainly attributable to an appeal for funds being made in 2011-12 for the redecoration of the Chapel building. The income from the use of the premises is down slightly but we are looking to review the rental receipts from the users.

The expenditure rose substantially from the previous year, now including the costs of a full year of having a minister again, the general increase in the cost of utilities and in particular a big increase in the capital costs for fabric at the Chapel building, including double glazing, car park works and the new PA system and projector.

We have made a significant loss this year and should not be continuing to make losses on this scale.

We are working on having a proper fabric budget for the coming year.

We have also moved £80,000 into a higher interest fixed term account to generate more income.

Alan D expressed thanks to the people who do practical jobs which cut down on expenditure on contractors, but he is worried about unnecessary purchases and the electricity consumption of certain kitchen appliances.

Steve R commented on the obvious discrepancy between the cost of running the buildings and the income from the users. We are obviously subsidising some of them and this has never been agreed by the Church Meeting. Appreciated the clear format of the accounts.

Thanks to NH for all her work.

Fabric Committee Report – this was presented by David Garner. The following projects have been undertaken during the course of the year:

Water mains replacement; Double glazing of chapel hall; Small hall lights; Cellar steps, repair to bulge; Risk assessment; Manse kitchen; Trees behind large hall; Shed; Compost heap area back to grass; Signage; Audio system; Video projector; Boiler time switch; New photocopier.

Ongoing general tasks include:

Gardening; Cleaning and Caretaking

Energy remains a huge cost. We are looking to get gas supply for boiler replacement

Thanks for all the work of the Fabric Committee.

Assistant Secretary's report – presented by Gwyneth HR – published in the July/August 2013 edition of Christward

Officers – confirmation of the members of the Fabric Committee as Harry F, Eileen L, David G, Michael W and Ian G.

Secretary – GHR elected as Church Secretary to replace MR who wishes to resign as her term on the Diaconate has ended.

Treasurer – NH confirmed as Treasurer.

Date of Next Annual General Meeting – 3rd Sunday in May 2014.

The Meeting closed with the Grace at 12.14pm.

**~ Minutes of the Church Meeting
of Union Chapel Fallowfield (Baptist)
held on Sunday 16th March 2014
at 11.20am.~**

Present: Ian Geere (chair), Gwyneth Heritage Roberts, Steve Roberts, Beryl Dykes, Eileen Land, Harry Fleming, Rachel Scott,

Gwen Mattock, Colin Marchbank-Smith, Nicola Hamilton, Michael Welford, Rachel Adebago, Leonie Earnshaw, Sarah Geere, Hilda Linton, David Garner, Margaret Garner, Geoff Walker, Julie Bryce, Lorna Richardson

Apologies: Alan Redhouse, Margaret Redhouse, Andy Howes, Carole Walker, Enid Welford and Ted Land (with children)

The Minutes of the January 2013 meeting (in current magazine) were approved.

Notification of AOB: None

Matters arising/updates/information:

The Ceilidh was a success. We made a smallish loss on the evening but will be sending a donation of £130 to Christian Aid. Thanks to the organisers, especially Nicola H and Lorna R.

Brenda M and Rachel S are now officially confirmed as Marriage Registrar and Assistant Registrar respectively. Michael W continues as an Assistant Registrar.

There was insufficient definite interest to make it worthwhile to have an Awayday in the Spring this year.

Food Bank: Lorna R and her friend Sue have cleared space in the Large Hall. The racking will be arriving on Tuesday along with a consignment of cereal from Kelloggs. We now have approximately 40 volunteers but more will be welcome. There will be volunteer training at Withington Methodist Church on 7th April. We have a date set for opening of 25th April. We have a good number of referrers and their training will be on 25th March, but Lorna R needs to know if there are more potential referrers.

Diaconate Changes and AGM timing and format:

Harry F has stepped down from the Diaconate which he feels is right for him. Thanks were expressed for his work and contributions to discussion.

Lorna R will finish her 3 year term in May. Nicola H also finishes 3 years, but she is eligible for re-election as a Deacon because she is the Treasurer.

Members are encouraged to start thinking about nominations for new Deacons.

AGM timing: In recent years we have had our AGM in May, in the “slot” for the usual business meeting, and this has taken the form of verbal reports. As a result we have had a gap of 4 months between ordinary meetings and have had little opportunity to reflect as a group on the year which has ended. It was proposed that this year we have a normal business meeting in May with the AGM in June, with a written Annual Report including the reports of the minister, treasurer and secretary and hopefully those of representatives of other church groups being circulated in writing in advance. This was approved by the meeting.

Memorandum of Understanding with O&A:

Harry F explained the background, which is that O&A are now a registered charity in their own right rather than a subcommittee of the church. Therefore we need a document reflecting our understanding of the relationship between the two organisations. Ian G and Harry F on behalf of the Church have met with Doug Macey and Judith Rack on behalf of O&A and have drawn up an Agreement with Preamble setting out the main points of understanding. These basically follow existing practice but there is now to be a formal annual meeting between the Church and the Trustees of O&A. The Agreement had been approved by both the Deacons and the O&A Committee and was commended to the Church Meeting. It was confirmed that after payment of expenses, O&A will pay any surplus funds to the Church as a contribution for their use of the church buildings. There is not a set figure. This continues the existing arrangement. The Church voted to adopt the agreement. Thanks to Harry F for realising the need and initiating this.

Path Repairs: The Deacons are aware that further conversations are needed about the interaction and scope of operation between the Church Meeting, the Diaconate and the Fabric Committee but have no proposals to bring to the meeting at this point.

David G explained that there are still three areas which require attention: (a) the route between the road and the Large Hall kitchen, (b) from the old front door on Wellington Road to Linton House, and (c) the uneven flags by the back door. The Fabric Committee have got two prices but they are not on a like-for-like basis. After some discussion the matter was referred back to the Fabric Committee with a request that they bring a recommendation to a later Church Meeting on how to proceed from here.

Easter Arrangements: There will be an evening communion on Maundy Thursday. The Good Friday Service will be at Union Chapel this year. On Easter Sunday there will be no early communion. Communion will be included in the context of the 9am breakfast. Easter Sunday worship will be at 10am as usual.

The Meeting closed with the Grace at 12.07pm

WWI Day 10th May 10am-4pm Union Chapel

This event is fast approaching! If you are interested in attending, please book your place now by calling Eileen on 445-7694.

We are also looking for 2 volunteers.

1) Are you interested in looking after and arranging the memorabilia brought in on the day?

2) We need a CD of WWI songs. Does anyone have a copy? Failing that, would anyone be willing to buy a copy and they will be re-imbursed.

If you are able to help with either of the above, please contact Eileen.

Thank you!

The Union Chapel Fallowfield Church Weekend 2014

June 13th to 15th 2014
(starting with Friday evening meal at 7.00pm)

The Poet, The Warrior, The Prophet

Led by Tim Presswood

Minister, Openshaw Baptist Tabernacle
(and Regional Minister of North West Baptist Association)



Is poetry more than golden words 'fluttering and dancing in the breeze?'
Can we talk of God in words which allow the Holy Spirit to fly free? Does
language have the power to express, shape and create the Word of God?
Can we speak the Kin-dom of God into being?

In the beginning was the Word...

And God said...



THORNLEIGH
The Esplanade, Grange Over Sands,
Cumbria, LA11 7HH
www.thornleigh-hotel.co.uk/



~ 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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