

CHURCH NEWS

Swann Lane Cheadle Hulme
Cheshire SK8 7HU
www.cheadlehulme.urc.org.uk



The
United
Reformed
Church

Minister:
0161 285 9206

Rev Alan Poolton MA
email: ap.poolton@ntlworld.com

APRIL 2018

Friends

THE RETURN OF HOPE

This month starts with Easter, which is a lovely thought. Whatever else, Easter speaks of new life, of fresh starts and the return of hope.

The whole traditional story is about darkness defeated by a light which can never be extinguished. That's why, in our northern hemisphere, Easter seems to fit in well with the changing season. Fresh flowers in the graveyard match the Easter hymns inside the church: *'The Lord of life is risen today/ Bring flowers of song to strew his way'*.

It's a strange fact that all through the long history of humankind, despite the evidence of our eyes, people have stubbornly refused to believe that death is the end. They buried their dead with food and artefacts they would need in the next life, whatever name they gave it – Valhalla, the Elysian Fields, Abraham's Bosom or Nirvana. Jesus called it **'the kingdom of heaven'** or **'eternal life'**. The very idea of heaven is almost beyond our comprehension — we can't image a life not lived in our familiar dimensions of time and space. But God lives beyond time and space, and Jesus said He is **'Spirit'**.

It's good that there are some things to believe in, yet which we cannot possibly understand now. Although one day, St Paul said, we shall. Until then we trust, we have faith, with Easter hymns and flowers as signs of the annual return of hope.

NEWS AROUND THE FELLOWSHIP

Spring is here at last(!) Most of us will be feeling uplifted but there are some folk who are burdened by concerns about health and other reasons. We pray Lord that you will be with these people... We especially pray for Bernice Platt and all her family as they mourn the loss of Jeffrey, one of Bernice's sons who died last month; Barbara & Tommy Danson and her family following the loss of Barbara's sister, Maggie. We also think of David Williams as he waits to return home.

We were pleased to welcome the following people to lead our worship during March - Margaret Dexter-Brown on Mothering Sunday and Robert Williams who led our Good Friday worship. Other services were taken by Alan, including the service of Light & Darkness on Maundy Thursday; Sandy & Morag who informed us of the work done by Traidcraft Exchange; and Andy Atree who steered the Passion Sunday service, a joint occasion with the Bramhall congregation.

During March we had our first '**Fellowship Club**' gathering which went well and are grateful to Carole Davies who has agreed to be the co-ordinator. There are several different board games to play to suit all tastes. Do come and join us, gentlemen and ladies - refreshments during a break.

Thank you to everyone who delivered the Churches Together Easter leaflets.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sat 23 JUN 5.30 pm Meal in Hall, 7 pm

Film Night

Sun 24 JUN Anniversary & Gift Day

Fri 13 JUL Summer Open Day ~ Hylton Drive

The News Team

LADIES CIRCLE

The March Ladies Circle meeting was held at the Vivienne's home.

The speaker, Jean Hamer, gave us a very interesting talk on the work and duties of the 'Knights Templar' at the time of the crusades to Jerusalem in the 12th century.

Thank you Vivienne for your hospitality. The next meeting will be held on 12 APR at the home of Bernice Platt. **Vera Lees**

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WED 11 APR

SOUP, SWEET and MEET

12.00 pm ~ 2 pm

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CHURCH MEETING ~ SUN 8 APR

The following papers for members are inserted into this magazine:

Agenda

Minutes of Church meeting 14 Jan 2018

2017 Accounts

Please do everything you can to attend the meeting.

Alison Stevens

NEW MONTHLY PODCAST

Podcast = internet based programme or video

'**Faith in Politics**' has been called an 'exciting' new podcast series that features guests discussing topics from current affairs that link in with faith, has been launched by the **Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)**.

The podcast is aimed at JPIT's existing supporters and activists, but aims to also appeal to a younger audience, thanks to their increased engagement with current affairs and politics, and the accessibility of social media and podcasts.

Those taking part in the podcasts are people who are living out a faith of some kind in public and political life. Guests will include the Co-Leader of the Green Party, Jonathan Bartley, Labour politicians, the Rt Hon Stephen Timms and Alan Milburn, and the Conservative politician and member of the House of Lords Baroness Sayeeda Warsi.

JPIT is supported by Baptists Together, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church.

Visit: www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/podcast/

Parish Pump website

CHURCHES TOGETHER

We pray for...

1 APRIL Chelwood Baptist... The minister Andrew Philips as he leads the fellowship and for the volunteers and team working at the ever increasingly busy **Foodbank**.

8 APRIL Churches Together in Cheadle Hulme. Those in each fellowship who are part of the Visiting Team - they will have the words to say, bringing love, compassion and practical help.

15 APRIL Churches Together in Cheadle Hulme. Those who work with children and young people, play groups, youth groups and in schools. A clear message the children can understand and be excited about.

**Breakfast Before on 8 APR 2018
[& every 2nd Sunday]**

Typical menu:

**Cereal, toast, fruit
tea, coffee, fresh orange,
bacon baps, pancakes or croissant**

22 APRIL Churches Together in Cheadle Hulme. The Church Annual General Meetings taking place at this time of year. The right people to be elected to serve and the fellowship to support and encourage each other in the work God has planned for us to do.

29 APRIL Cheadle Hulme Methodist. A weekend of **50th Anniversary Celebration** with "The Big Sing" on Sunday Evening – 29th April - A time of Praise and Worship for everyone.

THE BIG SING

Cheadle Hulme Methodist Church

To celebrate 50 years of
Worship and Community Activity.
Bring your friends and join with us,
children's groups,
the Worship Band and Singers
& St. Ann's Hospice Choir

**SUNDAY 29 APRIL
at 6.30 pm**

THE FEAR BARRIER

CHRISTIANS ARE CHALLENGED TO STEP BEYOND 'FEAR BARRIER' DURING WEEKEND OF INVITATION

Question: What scares many Christians?

Easy: The thought of inviting their friends and family to church with them.

But suppose we all got together, and did it as a national initiative? And so it is that the UK's first **National Weekend of Invitation** was planned. It will take place Friday 15th to Sunday 17th June 2018.

It is hoped that tens of thousands of church members across the country will use the weekend to step beyond the 'fear barrier' and invite their friends and family to church events.

The Weekend is in response to what the organisers call 'The churches greatest missed opportunity'. Research shows that up to three million people in the UK are actually open to an invitation, which never comes, because most Christians are too timid.

The date for the Weekend has been set to follow the Archbishops' **Thy Kingdom Come** prayer initiative.

Churches can decide for themselves what they will do on the weekend - big or small, for young or old, for a special group or for all. They may choose to invite people to something that's a regular activity, to a special guest event or guest service.'

The National Weekend of Invitation's website – weekendofinvitation.com – offers churches videos to use in their preparation and extensive resources to download.

Parish Pump website

**F I L M
N I G H T**

Sat 28 APR 7pm

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The theme of this year's interdenominational service was "All God's Creation is Very Good" prepared by the Christian women of Suriname. On Friday 2 MAR we met together at All Saints' Church - a particularly bad night weather-wise but the church was warm, as was the welcome, and after a thoughtful hour together sharing in the worship there was a welcome cup of tea and conversation.

Suriname lies in the north-eastern part of South America and over 90% of the country is covered by pristine tropical rainforest. During the colonial period, before 1863, Suriname had an agricultural economy based on slave work and exports of sugar, coffee, cocoa and cotton, mainly to the Netherlands. During World War I, the United States started mining there for bauxite – the raw material for aluminium, used in aircraft manufacture. Now, the economy is based on agriculture and the export of fish. Gold and crude oil are the greatest sources for foreign currency. In 1995, the World Bank classified Suriname as the seventeenth richest country in the world for its natural resources.

Freedom of religion is laid down in the Constitution and current statistics show Christianity 48%, Hinduism 22.2%, Islam 13.8%, Traditional Religions 1.8%, Javanism 0.8% and a small percentage Jewish and other religions. The women in Suriname believe that the Christian faith community can make a great contribution to the preservation of a living, healthy and safe environment. The future of the earth for the next generations matters to them and they see this as one of the key elements of the Christian faith, reminding them of the relationship between God and creation and God and humanity.

In 2019, the theme, which will be prepared by the Christian women of Slovenia, will be "Come – Everything is Ready".

Alison Stevens

20 YEARS AGO . . . EGGSHELLS

Chocolate Easter eggs only date back to the start of the 19th century, but the tradition of giving eggs at Easter is more than 200 years old. It all started with brightly coloured hen and

duck eggs, which were given to celebrate the season. By the end of the 17th century, things had progressed and egg-shaped toys were given to children during the festival.

The Victorians were the first to link Easter with chocolate. They gave each other cardboard eggs covered in satin, and filled with gifts and sweets.

The first eggs to be made from chocolate were produced in France and Germany at the start of the 19th century. The earliest eggs were solid. Hollow eggs followed, although their supply was restricted by the fact that each mould had to be hand painted with chocolate paste.

Author unknown

'STAND FIRM AND FIGHT IT OUT'

April 1918 was possibly the last really low point in the War for the Allies. Casualties remained high – indeed, so high that it was felt necessary to extend conscription (compulsory military service) to all men up to the age of 50. There were setbacks on the Western Front, too. Another German operation, bizarrely named 'Georgette', was initially successful, pushing the front line back across the river Lys and capturing the towns of Armentieres and Merville.

Mind you, those names are evidence of how static this War had become, because they had been part of the battle zone almost throughout the war. By the end of the month, and at great cost, some of this territory was recaptured. Field Marshall Haig issued a rather desperate call in a 'Backs to the Wall' speech, for the troops to 'stand firm and fight it out'. There was at a high level a certain element of panic. Could the whole thing be lost after all those years of sacrifice?

Outwardly, Germany seemed surprisingly buoyant. They invaded Finland and had military gains in Russia, taking the city of Kharkov. Their *Operation Michael* in France had also had some success. No wonder the Secretary of State for War, Lord Derby, resigned, to be replaced by Lord Milner. British generals and politicians were apparently unaware that the morale of the

German people was falling, as international trade collapsed and the cost of the war began to bite. In fact the 'Michael' campaign ended in defeat at the battle of Ancre. The pattern of the War hadn't really changed: gains and losses were simply part of the stalemate, and both sides were approaching exhaustion.

There was, however, one historic first for Britain in this month, the birth of the **Royal Air Force**. The Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service, was amalgamated in one fighting force. As if to mark the birth of the RAF, the most outstanding German pilot of the war, Manfred von Richthausen – known as the 'Red Baron' – was shot down and killed over the Somme. In the aerial dog-fights now a feature of the war, he had shot down no less than eighty British planes.

On 18th April 1918 the first of the 50-year-old men were recruited. How long would they serve, people wondered? In fact, by the time they finished their training, the war would be over.

Parish Pump website

FAITHFUL LIVING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

More than 250 people braved the snow in Manchester, on 17 March, to attend the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) conference 'Brave New World? Faithful living in a time of change.' Simeon Mitchell, the United Reformed Church's new Secretary for Church & Society, shares insights on the day.

The conference, held at Methodist Central Hall, was organised by the JPIT team, which is made up of four church denominations – the URC, the Methodist Church, the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Church of Scotland.

Having recently become a member of JPIT, in my role as Secretary for Church and Society, I was enormously encouraged by the response to the event. There was a tangible buzz as people from different places and backgrounds discovered their common interests and shared their excitement about ideas and hopes for the future. It was wonderful to meet so many church members who shared a burning desire for justice and a willingness to play their part in bringing about a better world.

It was great to see the URC's poet-minister, the Rev Lucy Berry, perform live at the event. As poet-in-residence to the conference, she drew the event to a close, delighting the hall with her witty and poignant verses that reflected on the themes of the day in her poem entitled 'Ideas, like doves'.

Keynote speakers included Labour MP, Stella Creasy who said we needed to accept we live in an age of change, illustrating the point that she had 'jumpers older than the internet'. She encouraged the audience to not be daunted by this, but respond with courage and compassion to bring about justice in society, pointing out that 'Jesus was a man of change', who did just this.

Peter Osborne, columnist for the Daily Mail, revealed he had recently become a convert to the importance of tackling climate change. Political leaders, he argued, had systematically failed to take it seriously. 'You can't send a battleship to fight climate change,' he said. 'And that's what politicians want to do.'

He also shared his concerns about Islamophobia in British society and more widely, and called for more honesty in talking about immigration.

Practical workshops enabled participants to engage more deeply with a wide range of issues facing society, including poverty and Universal Credit, ethical investment, hate crime, peace-making, and the new challenges faced by the younger generation.

In a workshop on 'creating a culture of welcome', members of Wilbraham St Ninian's URC, in Chorlton, Manchester, shared their experiences of welcoming asylum seekers and refugees into their congregation.

Later in the day, Sally Foster-Fulton, Head of Christian Aid Scotland, gave a rousing biblical reflection on the theme of 'subversive wisdom'. She encouraged members of the audience to take risks and join in with the irrepressible growth of God's kingdom.

URC website

w	u	n	j	e	r	u	s	a	l	e	m	h	o
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everyone

sacrifice

thieves

stalls

Jerusalem

visitors

problem

God

den

priests

Hosanna

shekels

drove

upsetting

killed

Jesus

place

crowds

prayer

worship

special

secretly

animals

Temple

SERVICE DETAILS & DUTIES

Readers: Please double-check your bible references upon arrival at church.

Elders and Readers: If you cannot do a duty, please arrange your own swap, notify Glyn Elsden and mark it up on the master copy on the foyer notice board. On arrival, always check notice board for last minute changes.

	1 APR	8 APR	15 APR	22 APR	29 APR
Service	All Age Communion	Family Service	Morning Worship	Morning Communion	Morning Worship
Time	11.15 am	10.30 am	10.30 am	10.30 am	10.30 am
Leaders	Rev Alan Poolton	Hilary Jackson	Ed Strachan	Rev Alan Poolton	Margaret Dexter-Brown
Reader	B Platt	V Elliott	V Wilson	H Elsden	L Frankish
Elder Duty	S Smith / C Davies	G Elsden	A Stevens	P Oliver / H Frankish	B Stevens
Door Duty	B Platt	V Elliott	V Wilson	H Elsden	N Lawrence
Flowers	Easter	Easter	E Ward	C Davies	V Lees
Coffee	D Green / B Platt	M Davies / another	S & M Smith	G Thompson / E Shackcloth	C Davies / M Smithers
Notes	EASTER SUNDAY COMMUNION	BREAKFAST BEFORE CHURCH MEETING		HOLY COMMUNION	

CHURCH REGISTERS - NONE

THINK ABOUT IT...

A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab centre said: 'Keep off the Grass.'

The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.

In a democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your Count that votes.

If you jumped off the bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine .

A vulture carrying two dead raccoons boards an airplane. The stewardess looks at him and says, 'I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger.'

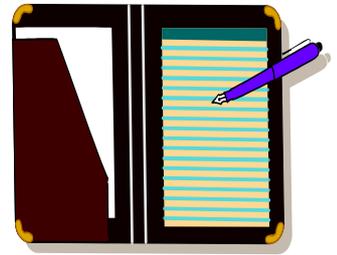
Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says, 'Dam!'

Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says, 'I've lost my electron.' The other says, 'Are you sure?' The first replies, 'Yes, I'm positive.'

Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root-canal? He used transcendental medication.

There was the person who sent ten puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.

CALENDAR



.....to the best of the editor's knowledge, unless you know better.....

APRIL

Sun 01			
Mon 02		8.00 pm	Scottish Country Dancing
Tues 03	9.30 am	Gardening group ~ Church	7.30 pm Elders' meeting ~ Church
Wed 04			
Thu 05			
Fri 06	10.00 am	Toddlers	7.45 pm Choir Rehearsal
Sat 07	10.00 am	Coffee Morning in aid of Church charities	
Sun 08	11.30 am	CHURCH MEETING	
Mon 09		8.00 pm	Scottish Country Dancing
Tues 10	9.30 am	Gardening group ~ Church	
Wed 11	12 ~2 pm	Soup, Sweet and Meet followed by ' Fellowship Club ' till 3.30 pm	
Thu 12		8.00 pm	Ladies Circle ~ Bernice Platt's
Fri 13	10.00 am	Toddlers	7.45 pm Choir Rehearsal
Sun 15	11.45 am	Management meeting	
Mon 16		7.00 pm	Christian Aid Focus Evening ~ Church
		8.00 pm	Scottish Country Dancing
Tues 17	9.30 am	Gardening group ~ Church	
Wed 18			
Thu 19			
Fri 20	10.00 am	Toddlers	7.45 pm Choir Rehearsal
Mon 23		8.00 pm	Scottish Country Dancing
Tues 24	9.30 am	Gardening group ~ Church	
Wed 25			
Thu 26			
Fri 27	10.00 am	Toddlers	7.45 pm Choir Rehearsal
Sat 28		7.00 pm	Film Night
Sun 29		6.30 pm	'The Big Sing' ~ Methodist Church
Mon 30		8.00 pm	Scottish Country Dancing

MAY

Tues 01	9.30 am	Gardening group ~ Church	
Wed 02			
Thu 03	7.00 am - 10 pm	LOCAL ELECTIONS IN FOYER	
Fri 04	10.00 am	Toddlers	7.45 pm Choir Rehearsal

Copy for **MAY 2018** **CHURCH NEWS** should be in the editors' hands by **15 APR 2018**

Edited & Published by Bernie & Alison Stevens,
swannlanesecretary@gmail.com ; churchallbook@gmail.com