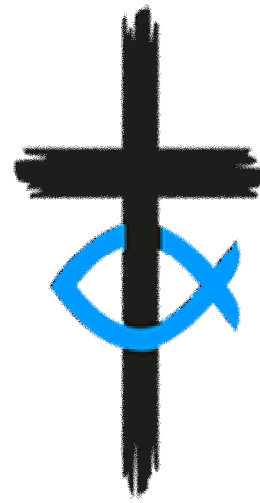


CH URC NEWS

Swann Lane Cheadle Hulme
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The
United
Reformed
Church

Partnership Minister:
Rev Kurauone Mutimwii
swannlaneminister@gmail.com

SEPTEMBER 2023

Friends,

Spiritual Disciplines: Service

'Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.'
(John 13: 14-15).

We are all familiar with those requests for more to 'serve on a team' at church, whether the coffee rota or with the children. However, these can hinder our understanding of the spiritual discipline of service.

The discipline of service involves learning from Jesus' example, when He washed the disciples' feet. Like His disciples, we are all called to take the place of a servant and be willing to serve those around us. Richard Foster in *'Celebration of Discipline'* contrasts 'self-righteous service', human effort wanting to impress others and be rewarded, with 'true service', which is rooted in our relationship with Jesus and delights in the service itself.

In his book, Richard Foster highlights the value of small, everyday sacrificial acts of service which flow from the place of being a servant: *'service is not a list of things to do, though in it we discover things to do. It is not a code of ethics, but a way of living.'* He goes on to highlight a number of acts of service, including: **hiddenness (working behind the scenes); small acts of service; guarding the reputation of others; being willing to be served ourselves; practising hospitality; listening and bearing the burdens of each other.** We need to pray for wisdom and discernment, so that we know when to say 'yes' and 'no' to serving. If we say 'yes' too much we can easily find ourselves becoming bitter or burned out!

Why not make it your prayer each morning: *'Lord Jesus, if it would please You, bring me someone today who I can serve?'*

Canon Paul Hardingham

NEWS AROUND THE FELLOWSHIP

As the summer fades into autumn, we think of those in our congregation, members and friends, who are anxious about their health and those who are unable to join us for Sunday worship for any reason.

Our thanks go to Rev Kurauone Mutimwii, Margaret Dexter-Brown, Prof Chris Whitehead and Ed Lyne (Student Minister) as well as members of the Worship Group for leading worship during July and August.

Following an approach to the Missional Partnership by Northern College, both Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme offered a summer placement to Ed which was accepted. He very willingly entered into the programme of events and meetings which each of the churches had planned as well as offering to lead 4 joint Bible Studies. We would like to thank him for his enthusiasm and friendship and wish him well in his continued studies towards ministry.

For the very first time, in order to take the load off Mavis who was only just back home out of hospital, our open Day on 7 July was moved to Church although some friends took time to visit Mavis and have a look round her garden. Lunch and refreshments were available at church together with plant, bring & buy and bric-a-brac stalls. Our thanks go to all who were involved on the day (thank you Eddie for the plants) and as a result of everyone's generosity we raised £644 for the five Church charities.

Fellowship Circle will re-commence after the summer break on Wednesday 6 SEPT 1.30-3pm for a bagatelle tournament.

Due to low attendance following the pandemic, a decision was made at the last Church meeting in July to no longer continue with the second Sunday 'Breakfast Before'. We hope to replace it with more opportunities for lunch together either before or after services.

Our best wishes go to all who will be celebrating their birthday or a special anniversary, in September.

The News Team

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

Sat 7 OCT - Macmillan Coffee Morning
Harvest Fish & Chip Supper &
Beetle Drive - more details nearer
the time.

Sun 8 OCT- CHURCH MEETING

SOUP, SWEET & MEET

Wed 20 SEP
12 noon

TRIAL RUN

At the last meeting of the Worship group, we considered the possibility of trialing an afternoon service **on the second Sunday of each month only**, to support those in our congregation and friends who find it difficult to come for 10.30 am. On this particular Sunday the service would start at 1.30pm **but** would be preceded by Lunch at 12 noon.

In order to spread out the different opportunities for a meal during this trial, our Soup, Sweet & Meet **will therefore move to the 3rd Wednesday** of each month starting on Wed 20 September at 12 noon.

Alison

A STRONG HOLD

**Should I slip and lose the way
The Lord will hold me fast,
Should I choose to walk away
I'm firmly in His grasp.**

**Though I walk through death's dark vale,
His rod and staff are there
I would not dare to walk this path
Without His loving care.**

**Although my hold on Him is light
His loving arms are wide,
What He's begun He will fulfil
Till I am safe on Canaan's side.**

**What God is this who loves us so?
Our future He has planned,
We're ever safe in His embrace
And none can snatch us from His hand.**

By Megan Carter

ECO TIPS FOR SEPTEMBER

Green your home this Autumn. Tackle climate change and reduce your heating bill by testing how draughty or leaky your home is. Find the gaps that let the cold air in and warm air out (think keyholes, letterboxes, gaps around the edges or bottoms of windows and doors, loft hatches, floorboards etc.) and fix these gaps using the correct materials: (there are lots of handy tutorials on how to do this online). Now is also a very good time to prepare for winter by sticking tinfoil or radiator panels between the wall and radiator, as these will help reflect heat back into your room during the colder months.

For more practical ways to enjoy, nurture and defend nature, sign up to A Rocha UK's 'Wild Christian' ~ email at: arochoa.org.uk/wild-christian

Alison



LINK TO HOPE SHOEBOXES

Thank you for all the donations for the last two months. Before we look to putting any boxes together, we will be checking to see if there are any items we have overlooked. In the meantime, please look out for all those **empty shoeboxes**. **Aim for 20 again?**

Bernie



A GRAIN OF SAND AT A TIME

This autumn, do you feel overwhelmed with all the things that you need to get done?

Then think of your life as an hourglass. There are thousands of grains of sand in the top of the hourglass; and they all pass slowly and evenly through the narrow neck in the middle. We are like that hourglass. When we start in the morning, there are hundreds of tasks which we feel that we must accomplish that day. But if we do not take them one at a time, and let them pass through the day slowly and evenly, as do the grains of sand passing through the narrow neck of the hour glass, then we are bound to break our own fragile physical and mental structure. Do not attempt more than God designed you to do.

Parish Pump

BEATITUDES FOR THE AGED

- ♦ Blessed are they who understand my faltering step and palsied hand.
- ♦ Blessed are they who know my ears today must strain to catch the things they say.
- ♦ Blessed are they who seem to know that my eyes are dim, and my wits are slow.
- ♦ Blessed are they who looked away when coffee was spilled at table today.
- ♦ Blessed are they with cheery smile who stop and chat for a little while.
- ♦ Blessed are they who never say 'you've told me that story twice today'.
- ♦ Blessed are they who make it known I'm loved, respected, and not alone.
- ♦ Blessed are they who ease the days of my journey home in loving ways.

Anon

BEYOND OUR 8 WALLS

CTCH hold open services every Christmas and Easter in Oak Meadow and recently completed a litter pick; look for our presence at the Cheadle Hulme Precinct festival. We continue to support Chelwood Foodbank Plus to expand their distribution of food nearly everywhere in Stockport to some extent. This absolutely relies on the generosity of people in churches, schools and shops, often in the leafier areas. CFP now have branches in Edgeley and Brinnington as well as Adswood. The 'Plus' refers to non-food items, ~ cleaning and baby items etc to beds. Yes, beds available, with linen included.

Our Partnership minister, Rev Kura, and family remain in the rented house in Heaton Mersey, unfortunately the plans to purchase a manse in Heaton Moor having fallen through. Macclesfield (& Bollington) URC hold their farewell service this month after moving to the Mersey Synod, and indeed, Wilmslow URC have voted to follow them. 2 other churches have already left and 2 other pairs combined leaving a Partnership of 9 churches. A vacancy has been declared for a second minister, which we pray for. Our Eco-church efforts continue under Liz Delafield.

We now have a new, very experienced Transitional Moderator, Rev Clare Downing. Recently from Wessex Synod and a former Moderator of General Assembly. A root and branch review of the Synod meeting structure has been implemented and Clare will be in the new system.

Bernie

URC AT A CROSSROADS

Nathan Mladin

Religion in the UK is changing, and fast. This change is often presented as a simple story of declining church attendance and Christian affiliation – and it is true that the UK as a whole is becoming less religiously affiliated. But digging deeper, the picture is more complicated.

As recent Theos research shows, many of those who tick a 'no religion' box still hold a range of spiritual beliefs. So too, the share of the UK population who adhere to a non-Christian religion is growing, and British Christianity has itself diversified – mainly through an upsurge of new and younger networks and denominations, and an increasingly global population. Taken as a whole, the Church in the UK is a patchwork of theological diversity that encompasses nearly 230 denominations and 45,500 congregations, where it can be counted at all.

The public conversation often focuses on what this complex picture means for the established Church of England. Yet such complexities also present unique opportunities and challenges for smaller historic denominations that are themselves called to adapt to significant religious and social change. Many of them also retain buildings and responsibilities that cannot easily be redirected in response to changing circumstances.

Here is a rarely told aspect of the story of contemporary British Christianity: How have they met the challenge...

In 2022, Theos and the United Reformed Church (URC) entered into a partnership to undertake an in-depth study of just one of these groups – the URC.

The United Reformed Church itself was seeking ways to listen attentively to the lived reality of the church at local level.

A key question was: "What does it look like when local URCs flourish?" The follow-up question to this was: "What do local churches need from the wider church to enable flourishing?"

For the URC, there was a desire to see itself

as others might see it, and the project has been an opportunity to reflect on the voices of those deeply immersed in the daily life of the church, especially at a local level. The hope is that this report will help inform and shape its discernment of how its resources are best used to enable local flourishing.

For Theos, the research offers a glimpse into how historic Christian denominations are responding on the ground, as they are required to adapt to the fast-paced changes of the modern world.

Members, friends

and neighbours...

FILM MATINEE

Sat 23 SEPT ~ 2.30 pm

It is striking that theological heritage continues to shape modern-day religious practice in this unique church tradition. For example, the distinctive Congregationalist and Presbyterian theologies which underpin the URC mean that normally individual congregations (rather than central leadership) make the final decision about which churches should open, and which should close. This reflects a commitment to equality and participation but it can be a strategic challenge.

At the same time, the URC's marriage of several different historic traditions also allows it to engage particularly constructively with disagreement. Not every observation made in this report would reflect the perspective of the whole URC or its agreed policies and positions. This itself is a sign of difference lived creatively together. It also reflects the intention of this report to listen to local perspectives which may reflect something different in tone, content or language from that of the formal policies of the church. The United Reformed Church at its core finds ways to live into significant diversity whilst remaining united.

Yet above all, what shines through from the URC's core identity is something simple and practical: a deep commitment to community engagement.

It is easy to see small churches and read a narrative of decline. The lived reality is that, very frequently, small congregations have a disproportionate effect within their local communities. Small groups of people act as salt and light, offering transformation in the light of Christ to the communities they serve. In the quantitative element of this research, we found URC respondents listing “community outreach” as their highest priority, even above pastoral care of their own members. In towns, villages and cities across the three nations, the URC is in partnership with many others at local level, meeting community needs, and serving Christ as it serves those beyond its walls.

Popular perspectives of historic denominations are that they represent an overwhelmingly older demographic. There is much truth in this. But again, behind that reality lies something more complex. The URC is a place where the voices of children and young people are heard, and actively influence the decision-making of all the governing councils of the church. Just as the URC places service to the local community above meeting the needs of its own members, its members, who are of an older demographic, place attending to the voices of young people centrally within the decision-making processes of the church.

In the end, then, the Church’s place in a changing religious landscape is not solely understood by grasping the right statistics or the high-level demographic changes, but by the way it acts on the ground. This report illustrates that the human face of the Church in modern Britain is found locally, as it is called to love its neighbour as itself.

Chine McDonald (Director, Theos)
Rev. Dr. John Bradbury (General Secretary, URC)

To be continued...

REAL-LIFE COURTROOM...

Attorney ~ Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your attorney?
Witness ~ No, this is how I always dress when I go to work.

Attorney ~ Do you recall the time when you examined the body?
Witness ~ The autopsy started around 8:30
Attorney ~ And Mr Denton was dead at that time?
Witness ~ If not, he was by the time I finished.

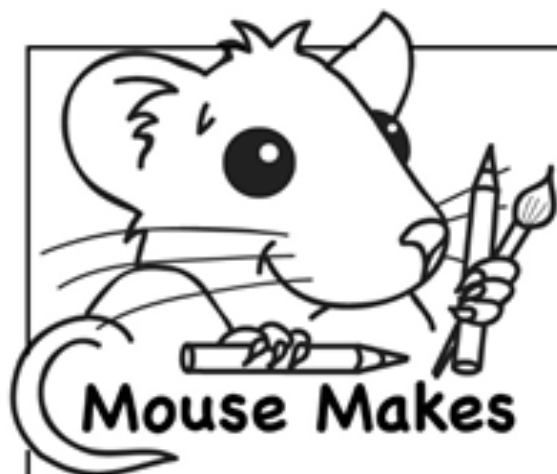
Attorney ~ Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?
Witness ~ All of them. The live ones put up too much of a fight.

Parish Pump

SUDOKU

Every column, row and 3x3 box must contain the only numbers 1 to 9...

8								
7		9	5			4	8	
	2		7				5	
				1	6			
2								9
			4	5				
	3				7		2	
	1	6			9	3		5
								6



THE WEEDS AND THE WHEAT

What did the enemy sow
amongst the wheat?

Matthew 13:25



READ

the parable in

Matthew 13 v24-30,
and v36-43

At harvest time the weeds
are gathered, bundled then

but the wheat is stored
in the

Matthew 13:30

Who sows the good seed?

Matthew 13:37

What does the field represent?

the
and who is the good seed?

The people of the

Matthew 13:38

Who sows the weeds?

The

Who are the harvesters?

The
Matthew 13:39

"He who has
ears, let him
"

Matthew 13:43

T O G E T H E R S H E A R
D S O X F I R E P E N G T
P E O P L E W B A A D E N
E E D L B E H A R V E S T
G D G A T H E R A E V I L
R K T I E K A N B N I P G
O Y I N D I T W L O L E R
W C M B U N D L E B V J A
E N E M Y G V I N U F E I
E W O R L D E S W R I S N
D E A R S O W E D N E U I
S O N O F M A N G E L S M
D I S C I P L E S D D V A

PARABLE • HEAVEN • SOWED • GOOD • SEED • FIELD • ENEMY • WHEAT • GRAIN
GROW • TOGETHER • TIME • HARVEST • GATHER • BUNDLE • TIE
PEOPLE • DISCIPLES • JESUS • EXPLAIN • EVIL • FIRE • END • AGE • EARS

Find the words from the questions too!

SERVICES

Elders' wish to keep everyone safe, so please stay home if you are ill.
 You may wear masks (perhaps for singing). Also, understand our plans may change with little notice.
 We may sometimes have a speaker and sometimes a simple in-house led service. Video conferencing continues and Leaders or readers may Zoom in or speak in church.
Duties are performed by a small team on a rota. Please check the board for swaps.

Date	3 SEP	10 SEP		17 SEP	24 SEP
Service	Morning Worship	Afternoon Worship	MP Evening Service	Morning Communion	Morning Worship
Time	10.30 am	1.30 pm	6.30 pm	10.30 am	10.30 am
Leader	Sandy Smith	Bernie Stevens	PARTNERSHIP	Rev Kurauone Mutimwii	Sandy Smith + Steve & Angela Rowley
Elder Duty	B Stevens	D Phillips		S Smith	D Phillips / A Stevens
Door	M Morton D Green	H Elsden		P Grieve	M Morton
Reader					
Flowers	R Pollitt	Silk		M Hardie	Silk
Coffee	M Hardie	H Elsden		M Morton	S & M Smith
Notes		Follows lunch ~ EDUCATION SUNDAY	Meeting ID: 717 0575 5463 Passcode (case sensitive): 2Hs7w3	HOLY COMMUNION BACK TO CHURCH SUNDAY	Presentation of Gift Day appeal

CHURCH REGISTERS - NONE

LECTIONARY for SEPTEMBER

3 SEPT: Jeremiah 15.15-21; Psalm 26.1-8;
 Romans 12.9-21; Matthew 16.21-28

10 SEPT: Ezekiel 33.7-11; Psalm 119.33-40;
 Romans 13.8-14; Matthew 18.15-20

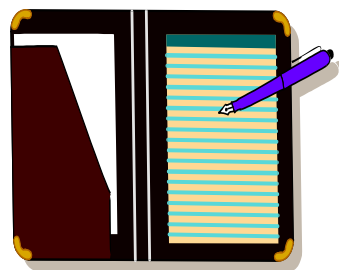
17 SEPT: Genesis 50.15-21; Psalm 103.(1-7),8-13;
 Romans 14.1-12; Matthew 18.21-35

24 SEPT: Jonah 3.10-4.11; Psalm 145.1-8;
 Philippians 1.21-30; Matthew 20.1-16

SUDOKU- answers

8	5	3	6	2	4	7	9	1
7	6	9	5	3	1	4	8	2
1	2	4	7	9	8	6	5	3
3	8	5	9	1	6	2	4	7
2	4	1	8	7	3	5	6	9
6	9	7	4	5	2	1	3	8
5	3	8	1	6	7	9	2	4
4	1	6	2	8	9	3	7	5
9	7	2	3	4	5	8	1	6

CALENDAR



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

SEPTEMBER

Fri 01	2pm	Choir Rehearsal	
Sat 02	10am~12 noon	COFFEE MORNING in aid of CHURCH CHARITIES	
Sun 03			
Mon 04			
Tues 05			
Wed 06	10.30am	Elders' meeting~ Coffee Lounge	
	1.30~3 pm	FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE ~ Coffee Lounge	
Thu 07	7.30 pm	MP Steering Group ~ Wilmslow	
Fri 08	2pm	Choir Rehearsal	
Sat 09			
Sun 10	12 noon	LUNCH before 1.30 pm Service	
Mon 11			
Tues 12			
Wed 13	10.30 am	Elders' Training with Pastor K - Coffee Lounge	
	1.30~3 pm	FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE ~ Coffee Lounge	
Thu 14			
Fri 15	10.00 am	Management meeting ~ Coffee Lounge	2pm Choir Rehearsal
Mon 18			
Tues 19			
Wed 20	12pm	SOUP, SWEET & MEET and FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE ~ coffee lounge	
Thu 21			
Fri 22	2pm	Choir Rehearsal	
Sat 23	2.30 pm	FILM MATINEE - members and friends /neighbours	
Mon 25			
Tues 26			
Wed 27	1.30~3 pm	FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE ~ Coffee Lounge	
Thu 28	7.30 pm	Worship Group on Zoom	
Fri 29	2pm	Choir Rehearsal	
Sat 30			

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