

CHURCH NEWS

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The
United
Reformed
Church



NOVEMBER

Friends,

Spiritual Disciplines: Generosity

*'It is more blessed to **give** than to **receive**' (Acts 20:35).*

What does generosity look like for us? The practice of generosity is about more than finance, as we recognise that everything we possess belongs to God (Ps 24:1). We are stewards of all our resources, including time, possessions, gifts, as well as our love and compassion for others. God enables us to be generous, because of all that He has given us:

'You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.' (2 Cor 9:11).

Here are some practical ways of practising generosity:

Give consistently: Planning our financial giving ensures that it isn't an afterthought, but carefully considered (2 Cor 9:7). We can offer time to volunteer in church or in the wider community. We might open our home to others for a meal or coffee.

Give spontaneously: God often brings opportunities across our path where we can respond spontaneously. This might be prompted by a text from a friend in crisis or giving a neighbour a helping hand. Acting spontaneously reminds us that God is always working in and through us.

Give sacrificially: Being generous also involves making sacrifices with our time and priorities, as we help others, share our possessions, or use our gifts. How can we simplify our busy lives, in order to free up space to practise more life transforming generosity?

To engage in generosity is an invitation to experience more of God's provision in our lives: *'Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you'* (Luke 6:38).

Canon Paul Hardingham

NEWS AROUND THE FELLOWSHIP

As we pray for members and friends of our congregation, O God grant that our own happiness and good health will never make us blind to their needs and forgetful of the unhappiness of others.

In October, our worship was led by the Choir, Rev Kurauone Mutimwii, Christopher Whitehead and lastly, at our 5th Sunday joint worship with Bramhall and Heald Green by Rev Peter Sharp. It was good to have Peter and Linda with us once again. Our thanks go to all.

Thank you to the donors for their recent contributions towards CHURC News.

Our Macmillan Coffee Morning raised £207 and our thanks go to everyone who helped to raise this generous amount.

Celebrations are in order that we managed to complete 20 shoeboxes and donated £90 towards the Link to Hope Shoebox Appeal
Thank you to all: the poorest families in the whole of Europe will be the beneficiaries.

We hope that all those who will be celebrating a birthday or special anniversary in November have a very happy time.

Our Christmas Lunch will be on Wed 13 December and will take the place of Soup & Sweet that month. The signing up list will shortly be available and lunch will cost £10pp.

The News Team

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

TUES 9 JAN 2024 - Partnership: Legacy of Slavery Workshop at Swann Lane ~ 7pm

Sun 14 JAN - Church Meeting

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WAR, WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR...'

The tragedy of war is that it uses man's best to do man's worst. - *Anon*

Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind. - *John F Kennedy*

Let men who delight in the cruelties of war remember that their day is coming. - *Louis Mumford*

In war, whichever side may call itself the victor, there are no winners, but all are losers. - *Neville Chamberlain*

Parish Pum

Tnx ~Edwin Starr for title

FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE

Unfortunately, we had to miss meeting on the first Wednesday in October but we celebrated getting together on the following one with a very luxurious cake made for us by Mary's granddaughter Libby. As we tucked in, Eric told us about his latest cruise which was very interesting.

Soup and Sweet was our next meeting and we ended the month with a quiz entitled "What's for Dinner", each answer being part of a menu.

Carole Davies

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SOUP, SWEET & MEET

Wed 15 NOV
12 noon

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TOY SERVICE

The annual Toy Service will be on Sun 26 NOV when we hope to gather as many new items as possible that can be taken to The Dandelion Community (~Wythenshawe URC). Under the present situation, more families are going to need to be supported in this way.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

If you would like to help raise funds for our Church charities by inserting a single, personalised greeting into the December newsletter instead of sending lots of individual cards, please just email me with your greeting, or pop it in an envelope along with a donation and hand to either Bernie or myself by **Sunday 19 NOV.**

Alison Stevens

CHRISTMAS MARKETS

This Christmas, the Cheadle Hulme precinct company are again holding charity markets with many stalls in the precinct.

Our own **Churches Together** will have a stall at each of 18 NOV and 9 DEC with people on hand for a chat and perhaps feature some of our work. **Furthermore**, we will also hold our annual carol service in Oak Meadow on the 9 DEC at 11am with visiting guitarist, Noel Fowler, from Handforth.

Bernie Stevens, Chairman CTCH

URC AT CROSSROADS

Aspects of flourishing, vibrant community action

The URC is made up of around 1300 churches which, despite having an average size of 30 people per congregation, contribute far more than might be expected in terms of community outreach. A local church leader we interviewed noted:

I've often been surprised how churches that have maybe 20 people can still be quite active in running things for the community. And I think that sort of wanting to serve the community is part of the DNA of the URC.

Indeed, this came through in a large number of interviews with local church leaders and synod staff, and is also reflected in the quantitative data. According to our survey, community outreach emerged as the number one priority of URC churches. Asked "What are your congregation's top two priorities? Where do you direct money, time, and energy?" a remarkable 71% of respondents (289/402) chose "Community outreach". This is all the more impressive considering it came above the pastoral care of members (see Append 1).

As came through in the qualitative and the quantitative elements of the research, a clear strength of the URC is its vibrant activism or, as one survey respondent put it, "its unrelenting generosity to the local community". All the churches we visited as part of the research had at least one project or initiative of building relationship with, and serving, its local community. In many cases, despite their small size, churches were involved in multiple projects, engaging a variety of groups, and responding to a variety of needs.

One church we came across, for example, despite having no more than six members who attend Sunday services, used its premises throughout the week to run a social café, a homework club, a clothes and food bank, a social boutique, and a laundrette. They were able to provide this level of community provision taking a decidedly relational approach, building trust with community members, involving them in the work and partnering with other civic organisations in the area. While the range and

number of projects run by this church were not themselves representative of the broader URC, this example was illustrative of how a small number of committed people can make a tangible difference working for the flourishing of their local communities.

For example, a respondent to our questionnaire wrote:

We are a very small church, four active members, and for two years without a minister except for the overview from our local Methodist minister who has been a real support. We have engaged a wide volunteer team, over twenty, from the community, some from other churches, many from none at all. We are very active in the community and becoming well-known for all the love and concern we share with the local population in a variety of ways. In this way we are building up the church and hopefully, now with a church leader and possibly a self-funded community worker, we hope to gradually engage some of the volunteers to become church members.

Similarly, a local church leader we spoke to noted: *Our mission is to be out there, doing the work, and maintaining a place of welcome, friendship, love and support, where we talk honestly about things and where we share as much as we can of our life and faith, and our assets of time, money, and gifts.*

The marks of successful community outreach that we came across include (1) intentionally listening to the needs of the community; (2) recognising the assets of the community; (3) creatively deploying the assets of the congregation, and (4) working as much as possible in partnership with the community, in a model of mutual, rather than unidirectional service.

Close-up: Llanfair Uniting Church
High on a hill above the Rhondda valley in south Wales, at the centre of the Penrhys village community sits Llanfair Uniting Church. A partnership between **eight** denominations, Llanfair is "the structure of Penryhs, the backbone of our community", according to Kyle, a local resident and volunteer. The locals see it as their church – an extension of home, a place to belong and care for each other through thick and thin.

"We try to help everyone in all the ways they need," says Neil, one of the driving forces in the community. "We help people with budgeting. But we don't judge if they have addictions. We simply take that into account. We help them with food, through the foodbank, we help with clothes, through the social boutique, if they need counselling we put them in touch with the right people."

For anyone who visits, it's plain to see that Llanfair is the estate's community hub. At the heart of it all is a

deep sense of trust and shared ownership. The social café, the homework club, the parents and toddlers' group, the youth activities, the clothes, toys and foodbanks are all run with the community, for the community. "It's important the church stays a church – a community church, and doesn't just become a community group," says Neil. Sharon, the church's key project worker, adds: "Everything we do here is faith and love in action."

Church-Related Community Workers

During the research, Church-related Community Workers, or CRCWs as they are informally known in the denomination, were widely praised for their work. CRCWs are trained (to level of a minister) and accredited workers who help churches engage and serve their local communities with relational savviness and imagination. They create and nurture relationships with local authorities, local civic groups and organisations (e.g. homelessness charities, food banks) and seek to mobilise the churches to which they are attached for projects and initiatives aimed at community transformation. As one interviewee put it, "It's never about imposing something on the area, it's about getting the area to come and tell you what they need, and then helping."

At their best, CRCWs prompt congregations to reflect on why they exist as churches in their specific areas and broaden their understanding of, and mission within their localities.

Nathan Mladin
to be continued...

COFFEE MORNING and CHRISTMAS

BRING & BUY STALL with RAFFLE

Sat 2 DEC 10 am ~ 12 noon

Gifts are needed for the stall
– crafts, books, cards

...in aid of our Church charities

Members, friends & neighbours

FILM MATINEE

Sat 26 NOV ~ 2.30 pm

(no film in December)

REPORT FROM ELDERS

When Elders met on 4 October, it was reported that CTCH pulpit supply for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January was not going to be possible because of the shortage of ministers. It was being suggested that a united service be held at All Saints.

A number of resolutions to be put to the Church meeting were agreed with regard to the Bequest (investment, funding of an RNCM student). It was hoped that a concert with Poynton Male Voice Choir and the Lawrence Singers would be organised sometime in April 2024.

There was a Missional Partnership Away Day for Elders and worship leaders on 14 October at Bramhall URC. Work was currently being carried out on a Manse for Pastor K and family. 2nd Sunday evening services on zoom would continue but decisions had yet to be made about Christmas services. A prayer calendar has been published so all congregations can pray for one of the pastorates each month.

Elders considered session 3 (Exploration) of the Renewed Beginnings series – trying to understand the church better and whether some jobs still needed to be done. It was important that action be taken if we became aware of difficulties.

Alison Stevens

GOOD AT SCRABBLE

Presbyterian – Best in prayer
Astronomer – Moon starrer
Desperation – A rope ends it
The eyes – They see
The Morse Code – Here come dots
Dormitory – Dirty room
Slot machines – Cash lost in me
Animosity – Is no amity
Election results – Lies; let's recount
Snooze alarms – Alas! No more Z's
A decimal point – I'm a dot in place
The earthquakes – That queer shake
Eleven plus two – Twelve plus one

Parish Pump

SERVICES

Elders' wish to keep everyone safe, so please stay home if you are unwell. 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 changes.

Date	5 NOV	11 NOV	12 NOV		19 NOV	26 NOV
Service	Morning Worship	ARMISTICE DAY	Remembrance Service	MP Evening Service On Zoom	Morning Worship	Morning Communion
Time	10.30 am	10.45 am	10.30 am	***6.30 pm***	10.30 am	10.30 am
Leader	Chris Whitehead	Bernie Stevens	Rev Kuruauone Mutimwii	Rev Kuruauone Mutimwii	Linda Rayner	Rev Peter Sharp
Elder Duty	P Oliver		A Stevens		D Phillips	S Smith / P Oliver
Door	H Elsdon		P Grieve		M Morton	G Elsdon
Reader						
Flowers	Remembrance	Remembrance	Remembrance		P Grieve	Silk
Coffee	M Morton		S & M Smith		B & A Stevens	D Green
Notes			REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY	Meeting ID: 717 0575 5463 Passcode (case sensitive) 2Hs7w3		HOLY COMMUNION TOY SERVICE

CHURCH REGISTERS - none

LECTIONARY for NOVEMBER

5 NOV: Micah 3.5-12; Psalm 43; 1 Thessalonians 2.9-13; Matthew 23.1-12

12 NOV: Amos 5.18-24; Psalm 70; 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18; Matthew 25.1-13

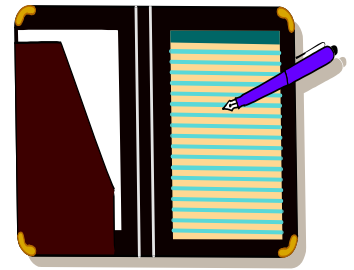
19 NOV: Zephaniah 1.7,12-18; Psalm 90.1-8,(9-11),12; 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11; Matthew 25.14-30

26 NOV: Ezekiel 34.11-16,20-24; Psalm 95.1-7a; Ephesians 1.15-23; Matthew 25.31-46

THINE

A Yorkshire man wanted an inscription on his wife's grave to read: 'She was Thine'. The engraver mistakenly put 'She was Thin'. The man wrote to complain that they had left off the 'e', so the next attempt read: 'E', She was Thin.'

CALENDAR



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

NOVEMBER

Wed 01	1.30~3 pm FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE ~ Coffee Lounge	
	7.30 pm	Worship Group on zoom
Thu 02	7.30pm	MP Steering Group on Zoom
Fri 03	10am Management meeting ~ Coffee Lounge	2pm Choir Rehearsal
Sat 04	10am~12 noon	COFFEE MORNING in aid of ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
Mon 06		
Tues 07		
Wed 08	10.30am Elders' meeting	1.30~3 pm FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE ~ Coffee Lounge
Thu 08		
Fri 10		2pm Choir Rehearsal
Mon 13		
Tues 14		
Wed 15	12pm SOUP, SWEET & MEET and FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE ~	coffee lounge
Thu 16		
Fri 17		2pm Choir Rehearsal
Sat 18	11am~4pm Cheadle Hulme Precinct Charity Market	
Mon 20		
Tues 21		
Wed 22	1.30~3 pm FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE ~ Coffee Lounge	
Thu 23		
Fri 24	2pm Choir Rehearsal	
Sat 25	2.30 pm	FILM MATINEE - members, friends and neighbours
Mon 27		
Tues 28		
Wed 29	1.30~3 pm FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE ~ Coffee Lounge	
Thu 30		



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