

Dear Friends,

There are many names or titles that are used for Jesus and his ministry. One of those names, that we are presented with through the lectionary readings this month, is the 'Good Shepherd'. In John's gospel we come across the well-loved and treasured words of Jesus, describing himself as the Good Shepherd, the one who gathers the flock and tends the sheep, looking after their needs and leading them safely. In contrast to the hired worker, the authentic shepherd is even prepared to lay down his own life for the protection of the sheep. And that is good news worth passing on, at whatever cost to us. John reflects on what it means, and how it expresses incredible love – the willingness to lay down one's life for one's friends.



Quite importantly, it makes clear that Jesus was not forced into dying; it would have been possible to avoid it, right up to the very last breath. There had been the temptation to do so at intervals throughout his ministry, and even as he hung dying he was goaded to 'show his power' by coming down from the cross. It was, then, at the moment of greatest weakness that Jesus actually showed his greatest strength of love.

And that is often true for us as well. Weakness feels just that; without glamour or nobility or anything other than the recognition that we have no strength of ourselves to do any more; yet it is in living through such times in God's strength that others turn out to be blessed and God's name to be glorified. If only we will trust God at such times, who knows what sheep will be rescued?

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, cares for us, looks after us and protects us. His love is so great that he won't let us down and he is ready to lay down his life for his sheep. In fact, as we have just celebrated, he did just that – he was ready to lay down his life to set us free.

From your friend and minister,

Brian

SASH Diary – Forthcoming Special Events and Services

April

1 st	8.30am	Easter Breakfast Service (Sale)
	10.45am	Easter Communion (AoM)
7 th	3.00pm	Messy Church 'Easter' (AoM)
8 th		Manchester Marathon
	6.30pm	Healing Service (Sale)
14 th	10.00am	Synod Worship Workshop (Roby URC)
21 st	7.00pm	'Joseph' Musical with AoM Singers (Altrincham URC)
22 nd	12 noon	Church AGM (Sale)
25 th	2.00pm	Church & Society (Sale)
28 th	10.00am	Synod Worship Workshop (Short Street URC)
28 th	4.00pm	'Panto' Movie Night (AoM)
29 th	7.00pm	CTiS Worship with United Christian Singers (Trinity Methodist)

May

1 st	1.00pm	'Dorothy's' Memory Cafe 1 st Birthday (Sale)
5 th	3.00pm	Messy Church 'Holy Spirit' (AoM)
8 th	8.00pm	CTiS Meeting (St Joseph's)
12 th	10.00am	Synod Worship Workshop (Sale)
12 th	10.00am	PTA Coffee Morning (AoM)

23rd 2.00pm Church & Society
(Sale)



A big Thank You

I just wanted to say a big ‘thank you’ to all who supported my project on non-violence. By giving up your usual refreshments after the morning service, just having a glass of water instead, and donating the money to charity I managed to raise £70.00.

The name of the charity that the money has been sent to is ‘Cheshire Without Abuse’. This is a local charity, near where I live, which supports families affected by domestic abuse. ‘Cheshire Without Abuse’ recognises that relationships are complicated and domestic abuse affects the whole family.

They have supported families affected by domestic abuse for 40 years and they specialise in supporting people through the challenges they face. Their teams are trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse, assess the needs of family members and respond to practical issues such as housing, legal aid and financial difficulties. They offer a weekly drop in advice clinic, a monthly legal clinic and a range of groups offering recovery and support as well as a counselling service and specialist children’s programmes.

Imogen Richards

Church & Society

On Wednesday 25th April we hope to welcome Julia Bentley as our guest speaker. The topic is “**Rogue Traders**”, an urgent issue which we are all likely to encounter at some time. All are very welcome to join us, at 2-3 pm.

Keith Argyle

New Telephone Number

Jenny Burgess can only be contacted on the following number
07753466674

North West Synod Update

Missional Partnerships – Group B

The Synod is to organise Churches into 'Missional Partnerships' from May of this year; we are to be in Group B. This comprises 16 existing Churches and the total number of members is given as follows:

Altrincham (Trinity & Woodlands) (103); Ashton on Mersey (34); Bramhall (101); Cheadle Hulme (53); Cheadle Trinity (URC/Methodist) (62); Christ Church, South Manchester (66); Dandelion Community, Wythenshawe (12); Didsbury (37); Edgeley Community Church (URC/Methodist) (20); Gatley (68); Heald Green (64); Heaton Moor United Church (URC/Methodist) (53); Macclesfield & Bollington (112); Reddish Christ Church (URC/Methodist) (22); Sale (70); Wilmslow (193).

Numbers provided by the Synod are from the 2016/7 Synod Year Book, and for the LEPS, it is the number of URC members not the total. (The remaining Churches in South Area, Groups A and C comprise 8 and 9 Churches respectively).

At present, ministers are Kirsty Thorpe at Wilmslow, Alan Poolton at Bramhall/Cheadle Hulme, Brian Jolly at Altrincham, Brian Acty at Sale and Ashton, Marion Tugwood at Macclesfield and Kate Grey (0.5) at Wythenshawe.

This arrangement is expected to give a 'loose network' of Churches working together as and where necessary. Distance is a major disadvantage and the whole process should not be hindered by even more meetings. This would be counter-productive to already decreasing and ageing congregations.

What could be a possibility is the sharing of expertise as we have much to give - Memory Café, Church and Society, Holidays at Home, Messy Church.

This does not take into account the existing local ecumenical links and the resulting initiatives that have been developed.

(Contd)

The total number of ministers assigned to the 33 Churches in South Area will be 8, with our Missional Partnership of 1,107 members being served by 4 ministers. Such a reorganisation will have far-reaching implications both for ministry and for us as members.

Extensive Training will be available for 'Worship Groups' and individuals to preside over the Sacraments of Communion and Baptism, initially. This will begin in the next month. Other areas for Training will be apparent in the coming months.

Yvonne Jones – Sale

Churches Together in Sale – recent meeting

An important part of our ecumenical contact are our quarterly services which, recently, have not been so well attended. These provide an important link with our local ecumenical partners many of whom are facing similar issues to ourselves. Those planned for this year are:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| April 29 | Trinity Methodist |
| | with the United Christian Singers leading worship |
| July 29 | St Paul's |
| October 28 | St Anne's - tbc |
| December 2 | St Joseph's RC - Taize |

All services will take place at 7pm.

Our Annual Pentecost Service, will be at Holy Family RC School, as an outdoor service with the Sale Salvation Army Band. This will be at 3.00pm.

The Annual Coach trip has proved popular and this year will take place on Wednesday, June 13 to New Brighton. Details are posted on the Sale lounge notice board.

We do hope you will consider joining us in all these activities - I can assure you, you will be made most welcome.

Yvonne Jones

Wednesday Society

We meet in the lounge at Sale URC on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 2pm. Our forthcoming Meetings are:

- April 4 'Tax, Care and Toy Boys!' Debbie Beatson,
 Co-operative Bank (Estate Planning)
- April 18 Beetle Drive - Margaret Baguley
- May 2 'Madagascar' - Brian Feast

We do hope you will join us and we look forward to seeing you; you will be made most welcome.

Yvonne Jones

Ashton on-Mersey Social Events

Saturday 21st April, 7 pm

The Ashton-upon-Mersey Music Group have been invited to perform "Joseph and his Technicolour Dream Coat" at Altrincham URC on the above date. We are to have two rehearsals on Friday 13th and Friday 20th at A-on-M Church (7.30pm), and anyone is welcome to come along and join us. Just let Karen Garrattley know a.s.a.p. Of course, you will be welcome to go along and watch the performance at Altrincham. It would be lovely to have your support.

Saturday 29th April, 4 pm

A showing of the Music Group's last pantomime ♥STARSHIP HUMBUG THE NEXT GENERATION♥ is to be shown on DVD. There will be no charge but we will have a **bring and share buffet**.

We would love to see you, so please put it in your diary and come along. A warm welcome is promised.

Pat Joyce

Bible Word Search:

CROSS, TOMB, & RESURRECTION

Z C W B D M L O K S S Y Y H X
 U D R E E R V E A Q P Z Q E G
 I H E A V E N S V V S D D H L
 Q T F R S D R P V A O U W E O
 V C O O O E G E L D Y E S N E
 O C R M Q M X V I E C J W E F
 O A G U B P A S S O R C K L J
 S F I H C T C N N X K S I A I
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AROSE
 CRUCIFIXION
 FORGIVENESS
 MAGDALENE
 RESURRECTION

ASCENSION
 DISCIPLES
 HEAVEN
 NICODEMUS
 ROMANS

CROSS
 EASTER
 JESUS
 REDEMPTIO
 SALVATIO

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Pleasant Tuesday Afternoon

Meetings planned for April:

3 rd	no meeting
10 th	Revd Valerie Davies
17 th	Mr Jim McKnight – Fred Astaire & his ladies
24 th	Revd Brian Acty

Everyone is welcome to attend starting at 2:00pm.

Katherine Paxton

CAMEO - Important Notice

With effect from April 2018, “**C**ome **A**nd **M**ee**T** **E**ach **O**ther” will hold their meetings on the second **Wednesday** of every month at 7:30pm. All are welcome.

Flower List, Ashton

1 st April	blank
8 th April	Linda Harper
15 th April	June Horsefield
22 nd April	blank
29 th April	Myra Ranson

Flower List, Sale

15 th April	Wendy MacDonald
22 nd April	Alison Gallen

On the 1st (Easter Day) and 29th we will have morning services at Ashton, and on the 8th the service will be in the evening, because of the Manchester Marathon. So no need for the usual flowers then.

Communion Fund, Sale

In March £70 was donated to the Children's Air Ambulance.

Nancy Stringer

Messy Church, Ashton on Mersey in March

We had a bumper attendance with 21 children including babes in arms, along with their adults at this month's Messy Church.

We explored **'our mothers'** love for us and being part of a family.

Everyone literally got their hands dirty as they painted them green to make 'handprint' leaves for our 'messy church' family tree.



Can you spot the 2 baby foot leaves on the tree on the left made by our youngest messy church member with the help of his mum?



Children had a chance to make Mother's Day cards, brooches, cup cosies and paper doll families. They also role-played being mums, bathing and caring for baby dolls and doing the washing up as they thought about how hard our mums work looking after us.

Marshmallows were flying around under the watchful eye of our minister Brian, as children used homemade catapults to aim them at targets of different places on a mat that they felt 'part of family in' such as home, school, clubs and church. In the Celebration, Dave Fraser took the children on a 'bear hunt' story, as they imagined being Naomi and Ruth going home to Naomi's family. He also talked about the tradition of Mothering Sunday. Children were in fine voice as they sang songs and played instruments, led by Karen and her helpers.

Next month our theme is **'Easter'**. As always, we would love to see you there. Messy Church is for all ages, so come along and join us, 3pm till 5pm on Saturday 7th April. See more of what we get up to on Facebook:

Messy Church AonM@messychurchaonm

Helen Priestman

Thank You All

As I write, it is almost two months since Alan died in January. My son Rob and I want to thank you for your care for both of us in the sad days that followed, expressed in the many beautiful cards, letters, flowers and visits and your prayers.

Your presence at the lovely thanksgiving service in church, led by Brian with Sue's meaningful music, and the many generous gifts of money to be shared between the two charities, have overwhelmed and humbled us.

These three little words seem so inadequate, but THANK YOU ALL.

Yours very sincerely,

Margaret Menzies

Thank You

Thank you everyone for your kind messages, cards & gifts after my recent fall & subsequent surgery.

Knowing I have such caring family & friends has meant a great deal to me & helps with my recovery.

June Horsefield

Quotes from Stephen Hawkings

On living with a disability...

“My advice to other disabled people would be, concentrate on things your disability doesn't prevent you doing well, and don't regret the things it interferes with. Don't be disabled in spirit, as well as physically.” - *Interview, New York Times, May 2011*

On an imperfect world...

“Without imperfection, you or I would not exist” - *On Into The Universe With Stephen Hawking, Discovery Channel, 2010*

Dorothy's Memory Café

Over the last month in addition to our usual weekly activities we have had a visit from UkuHale – a ukulele band from Hale who played and



sang many well-loved songs to which we were able to add our voices.

We had our monthly “Keep Fit” session – an hour of mostly chair exercises which help to keep us mobile, able to balance and avoid falls.

Volunteers as well as guests enjoy these sessions as you can see!



We have many regular visitors some of whom have been with us since the very first meeting – they have become good friends with us as well as with one another. We have been saddened in the last month to lose one of our members -

Pauline Tomlinson. Pauline’s funeral was taken by Brian and six of us were able to attend. It was a lovely service where we learned so much about her life. It made us realise how important sharing our stories is.

One in three of those born today will develop dementia. One in three of those of us over sixty-five-year olds now will develop dementia.

Margaret Argyle

Thank You

I should like to express my appreciation for the exceptional kindness shown to me since I became unwell. I am certain that your thoughts and prayers will continue to support me as I proceed to the next phase of treatment.

Yvonne Jones



Kath Jones and Bill Cowhig, Summer 2002
Submitted by Alison Gallan, with thanks

We have seen photos of yesteryear on church notice boards lately. Have you any interesting old photos of church life that you would like to put in SASH? You can send them to us as jpegs or as prints. We promise to return them afterwards!

Can you please send all other items as Word documents or hand-written so that we can have one style throughout.

Thanks for all your interesting submissions! Keep them coming! Please send items for the May SASH to us by Sunday 15th April.

Keith and Margaret Argyle