

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH IN BRAMHALL

Volume 21 Issue 3

March 2019

NEWS & VIEWS

LENT

This month sees the start of Lent, the six-week period leading up to Easter. In the early Church, it was a time when new converts were instructed in the faith, ready for their baptism at Easter.

Over the years, Lent has become a season of penitence, self-examination and fasting. Jesus began His earthly ministry by fasting in the wilderness for 40 days and taught His disciples to fast, *'when you fast..'* (Matthew 6:17).

Fasting might involve missing one or two meals in a day, refraining from TV or alcohol, or whatever gets in the way of us fully focusing on God. What are the reasons for fasting?

The act of giving up something is a tangible sacrifice to God, reminding us of our desire to put him first in our

lives.

Giving up things I value shows me how depend I can be on other things rather than God. Fasting helps me to surrender my *'idols'* to God.

When fasting I am reminded of a deeper hunger and need for God in my life: *'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.'* (Matthew 5:6). I learn to be more dependent on God, while releasing the stuff I depend on in my life.

Lent can also be a time to embrace new spiritual disciplines eg joining a study group, *'random acts of kindness'*, giving more time to prayer and Bible study.

Whatever you do, have a great Lent!

from Rev Tony Horsfield
Parish Pump Web Site



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SUNDAY SERVICES:

9.30 am All-age Worship Breakfast from 9.00 am
10.30 am Reflective Worship (Communion 1st Sunday in each month)

POSITIVE LENT

The last couple of years we have done Positive Lent with our Handbag appeal. This year will be the last one we do for this appeal.

In the last 12 months some people have been continually donating both handbags and their contents and we are now blessed with many handbags although we won't turn more away.

So, this lent which of course starts on the 6th March we are appealing for more contents of handbags. Especially things that people may not treat themselves to in their time of need where they are not concentrating on themselves but on the rest of their family.

So, ladies just look in your handbag and see what's in there and Gents think about all those things that ladies keep in there just in case someone needs something.

There are tissues, nail files, nail varnish, perfume, combs, brushes, jewellery, small toiletries like bubble bath, shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, plasters, small note books, fold up shopping bags the list is endless, no wonder our bags are so heavy.

Also using the foodbanks and other agencies are Men and they also need some items that they would perhaps not normally treat themselves to so please also keep this in mind.

There will be a box in the vestibule for the duration of Lent so please over the Lent period bring in your items its easier than giving up chocolate and can bring happiness to so many people.

Thanks for your support.

Elaine Noden



Churches Together in Bramhall & Woodford (CTiBW) Update **CTiBW Prayer Breakfast:**

The next Prayer Breakfast will be held at the Christian Fellowship Church, Bramhall Lane South, on the 23rd March from 8.30am. Please think about coming along and joining other local Christians in Prayer and enjoy a hearty breakfast.

Good Friday Services: The early morning service (9.45am on 30th March) will this year be held at **St Michaels Church**. The service will be followed by the **Walk of Witness** which processes to Bramhall Village for an Open-Air Service, outside the Methodist Church at 11.00am. Last year both services and the walk from Robins Lane to the village were well attended. I do hope you will consider attending one of the services and joining the Walk of Witness this year, as this is one of the few opportunities we have to publicly witness our faith in Bramhall.

Get in your diary now.

Pentecost Praise: Plans for a combined '**Songs of Praise**' to be held on the Day of Pentecost, (Sunday 9th June) outside Bramhall Hall are being made. Please get the date in your diaries and plan to come along and add your voice to the praise and worship.

Another great opportunity to publicly witness our faith in Bramhall.

Holiday at Home Summer special:
Monday 12th to Wednesday 14th August
10.30am until 4.00pm

Churches Together in Bramhall in Woodford are once again hosting the Annual Summer Special 'Holiday at Home' at the United Reformed Church and this year please note that the dates of the week for the event have changed from 'Tuesday to Thursday' to '**Monday to Wednesday**'. Holiday at Home is for the senior citizens of our community who do not get out much and perhaps live alone and provides three days of fun, friendship, singing, games, flower arranging, marvellous home cooked lunches and a trip to Tatton Park!

Do you know anyone who would benefit from attending?

If so speak to Graham or Carole Perkin.

Can you Help? Help is needed in all sorts of ways from providing transport to get folks from their homes to our Church (and back home again), to helping set up tables or being there during the event acting as stewards and carers.

Help is also needed on the evening of Sunday 11th August from 6.00pm to help move furniture, put out tables/chairs and put up decorations.

If you can help at all, on any of the dates above, (for the whole day, or just a couple of hours), contact Graham or Carole Perkin.

Graham Perkin

more tokens they receive, the bigger the donation they will be given from the supermarket, so it was a weighty choice! I chose the local Youth Choir.

I am in the habit, just before I sleep, of looking back over the day that just finished. That night as I went to sleep God reminded me about the blue token and my concern to use it wisely. As I get older I am increasingly aware of the importance of every day, that each new day is a gift from God to be enjoyed and cherished. None of us know how many days we have, but we do know they are running out. All the more reason, then, to use them wisely.

As I thought about the token it seemed to me that with each new day I have been given the gift of a token from God, and I should do my best to use it for His glory. When we are young, with our lives stretching out ahead of us, it is as if we have thousands of tokens to spend (70 years, for example, would be 25,550 tokens), so to waste a few is not such a disaster. However, now that I am in my 69th year, there may not be so many tokens left! I need to spend each one wisely.

Moses, who lived to the grand old age of 120, prayed to God like this: "Teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom (Psalm 90:12)."

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GOD AND THE TESCO TOKEN

I was shopping recently with my wife at the local Tesco store. Having paid for our goods we were given a blue token, which my wife explained we could place in the donation box of a local good cause as we left the shop.

Sure enough, near the exit were three large plastic containers into which we could drop our token, each representing a different charity needing support. The

APRECIATION

This message was sent on 10th February

Anne and Alastair wish to thank you all for the lovely flowers and good wishes received this past week. Alastair is doing well after hip operation and hopes to be home in a day or two.

Thank you all again for your support

Anne Mochrie.

**"WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF
PRAYER" 2019**



Bramhall Baptist Church is the local host for the 2019 "Women's World Day of Prayer" to be held on **Friday 8th March at 10.30pm**. The speaker will be Angela Rowley.

The Christian Women of Slovenia have prepared a service as their worldwide message on the theme: **"Come - Everything is Ready!"**.

Modern Slovenia became independent on 27 June 1991. It lies at the heart of Europe, bordered by Italy, Austria, Croatia and Hungary. It is a land of immense natural beauty, great variety of scenery and varied climate. One of the smallest countries in Europe (it is 20.73km², roughly the same size as Wales), it has a population of just under two million people (about twice the population of Birmingham). Almost half of the people live in cities, and over a quarter live in the capital, Ljubljana.

The majority (82%) are Slovenes, but there are also Croats, Serbs, Bosnians, Macedonians and Montenegrins, and a small number of Roma, who have their own language and customs. The official language is Slovene, but Hungarian and Italian are co-official languages for those minority communities.

All women, and indeed men, are welcome to attend the event which is a cooperation between Churches Together in Bramhall & Woodford.

Come and be among the three million Christians worldwide involved in a rolling series of services from sunrise to sunset.

Refreshments will be served after the service.

Carole Perkin

FREEWILL OFFERINGS

Those of you who were able to attend the recent Church Meeting will know that for the first time since I took over as Treasurer we suffered a large deficit in our annual accounts for 2018.

Whilst there are several reasons for this, including "one off costs" and timings of Standing Orders, it led me to review our Giving and the costs of running the church over the nine year period. This has shown that – as might be expected – the total amount received has gradually declined, whilst costs have risen as our building ages and our ability to maintain it declines with our advancing years!

We do have Reserves in the form of Investments and cash deposits but it is not good practice to use these to fund losses and our Mission Fund, which stood at £10,067 in December, will both have to be paid for out of cash reserves. It is important that we return to the situation where our yearly expenditure is covered by our yearly income.

Annual increases in the cost of living have been experienced by all of us and we are used to having to find a little bit more to cover these. Church is no different. We are very fortunate to have a large amount of rental income which has in the past protected us from having to seek increased donations and no action has been taken to ask for these whilst I have been Treasurer.

Some members have reviewed their Giving as a matter of course and increased

their Standing Order or Envelope Scheme donations but when I completed the budget for 2019, assuming that total Giving remains much the same, it indicates that we will still be making a loss at the end of this year. If, however, each of us were able to increase our giving by £1 per week from March onwards, we would make a small surplus and by the end of 2020 replace about half of the deficit.

We must remember also that people give to the church in different ways, offering their time and talents, so whichever way you choose it must be the right one for you.

If you want to chat to me about anything mentioned above or want to join the Envelope Scheme or set up a standing order, both of which are of great assistance when trying to budget, please do not hesitate to speak to me.

Joe James Treasurer
(0161 439 8241)

DREAM BIG

Tuesday 26th February 7.00pm.

If you cast your minds back to 2015/16 that is when we started on the Dream Big path. So, we thought it was time to look at where we are and where we want to go.

So please come along on the 26th and be reminded of what we have done and are still looking at but most importantly get your thinking caps on and bring with you your Dreams for the future, especially as this year things will be changing for us as a Church.

We are going to have to pull together more than ever and make sure that everyone's talents can be used to make our Dreams a reality.

Make sure that you are there on the 26th to join in discussions and prayers for our future.

Elaine Noden

KNIT AND KNATTER

Go for it - March 17th - time to call in the knitted chicks for Francis House. It is one of their big fund raisers. Last year they raised £51,000. If you cannot knit and would rather buy Cadbury's crème eggs as donations. We will leave a basket in the vestibule and we will be delighted to receive them.

Norma Fox

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The crocus' are beginning to show the snowdrops have forced themselves through the hard ground and raising their pretty white heads to the sky. The sun does shine on some days and our thoughts are turning to the annual spring Clean, those cupboards need sorting, I must throw out those clothes I haven't worn in years. When this happens please don't forget that we will be having our annual Jumble sale and will welcome anything you don't want. The date **Saturday 27th April**. We will be accepting your goods from the Sunday 13th April.

Some of you may be wondering "Where do are the left-overs go - landfill?" at the end of our sale. They are collected by a church in Salford, where they distribute them to the needy, They also provide food and accommodation for the homeless. So everything is used one way or the other. Thank you for thinking of others.

Jean James

WITH MOTHERING SUNDAY IN MIND...

Woman takes her being from man, man takes his well-being from woman. *Thomas Adams*

There is an old Jewish saying: *God could not be everywhere, and therefore He made mothers.*

Mother Church, Mother Earth, Mother of the Gods – our human mothers – all of them have been part of the celebration of ‘Mothering Sunday’ – as the fourth Sunday in Lent is affectionately known. It has been celebrated in the UK since at least the 16th century.

In Roman times, great festivals were held every Spring to honour Cybele, Mother of all the Gods. Other pagan festivals in honour of Mother Earth were also celebrated. With the arrival of Christianity, the festival became one honouring Mother Church.

During the Middle Ages, young people apprenticed to craftsmen or working as ‘live-in’ servants were allowed only one holiday a year on which to visit their families – which is how ‘Mothering Sunday’ got its name. This special day became a day of family rejoicing, and the Lenten fast was broken. In some places the day was called Simnel Day, because of the sweet cakes called simnel cakes traditionally eaten on that day.

In recent years the holiday has changed and in many ways now resembles the American Mothers’ Day, with families going out to Sunday lunch and generally making a fuss of their mother on the day.

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SMILE LINES**Hair-cut**

A minister, known for his lengthy sermons, noticed a man leave during the middle of his message. The man returned as the service concluded. Afterwards the minister asked the man where he had gone. “I went to get a hair-cut,” was the reply.

“But,” protested the minister, “why didn’t you do that before the service?”

“Because,” said the man, “I didn’t need one then.”

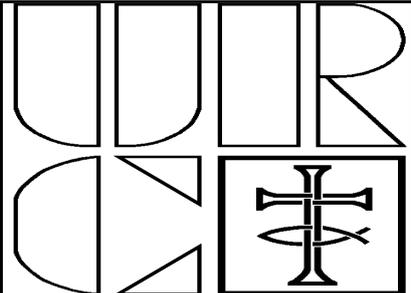
TV

The mind is like a television...when it goes blank, it’s a good idea to turn off the sound.

Don’t lie

If you tell the truth, you don’t have to remember anything.

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