

# NEWS & VIEWS

April 2024

**The newsletter of the United Reformed Church in Bramhall**

## The Cross and Son of Man Lifted Up

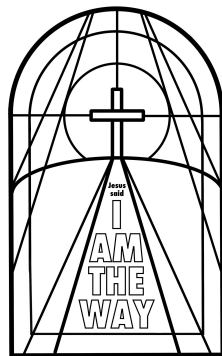
John 3:14-16 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, **so the Son of Man must be lifted up**, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 12 32 “**And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.**”

As humans, we have the tendency to lift up ourselves, convictions, families, interests, religions, politics, countries, banners, races and cultures up higher than any other. We would rather have people become subservient to what we hold dear and do it by manipulation and coercion if the way of love, compassion and mercy seems difficult to follow through. One way to introspect during this Easter time is perhaps, to look at some of the things we

are passionate about, things we lift high up and fight for and see what and who it promotes.

Recently, as Liz Delafield was preaching at Altrincham United Reformed Church, she brought about a number of portraits of God and Jesus Christ from the internet and she asked people which of the portraits they would pick and why. That was very inspiring and thought-provoking, because in our journey of faith and way of church, the portrait of God and Jesus Christ we tend to lift and project to ourselves, and probably for others, speaks volumes about what our deepest convictions are and how our faith was formed, nurtured and groomed.

Easter time is presenting for us the need to reflect on the way we have been lifting the Son of Man on the cross to mark the manner in which he died, through our proclamation of



<b>UNITED REFORMED CHURCH</b>  Robins Lane Bramhall SK7 2PE  <a href="http://www.urcbramhall.co.uk">www.urcbramhall.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:urc.bramhall2@gmail.com">urc.bramhall2@gmail.com</a>  Our church is a member of the URC South Manchester and Cheshire Missional Partnership.	<b>SUNDAY SERVICES</b>  <b>10.00 am</b> Reflective Worship <i>In Church and on Zoom (see page 2 for details)</i>					
	<table border="0"> <tr> <td> <b>SECRETARY</b>            Helen Beattie            0161 440 9227  <a href="mailto:helenmbeattie@outlook.com">helenmbeattie@outlook.com</a> </td> <td> <b>TREASURER</b>            Joe James            0161 439 8241  <a href="mailto:jw.james@talktalk.net">jw.james@talktalk.net</a> </td> <td> <b>MINISTERIAL CONTACT</b>            If you require the support of a minister, please contact Sue Matthews in the first instance            0161 439 1066         </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <b>CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY</b>            Elaine Noden            0161 355 1459  <a href="mailto:elley2011@hotmail.co.uk">elley2011@hotmail.co.uk</a> </td> <td> <b>OFFICE</b>            Answerphone            0161 439 4807         </td> <td> <b>ROOM BOOKINGS</b>            07909 940819            Answerphone checked daily         </td> </tr> </table>	<b>SECRETARY</b> Helen Beattie 0161 440 9227 <a href="mailto:helenmbeattie@outlook.com">helenmbeattie@outlook.com</a>	<b>TREASURER</b> Joe James 0161 439 8241 <a href="mailto:jw.james@talktalk.net">jw.james@talktalk.net</a>	<b>MINISTERIAL CONTACT</b> If you require the support of a minister, please contact Sue Matthews in the first instance 0161 439 1066	<b>CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY</b> Elaine Noden 0161 355 1459 <a href="mailto:elley2011@hotmail.co.uk">elley2011@hotmail.co.uk</a>	<b>OFFICE</b> Answerphone 0161 439 4807
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the gospel in words and actions. May that be the opportunity to see whether the Christ and Cross we are lifting is either attracting people to God, forcing people to our God or turning people away from God.

Perhaps, we have lifted the Cross the other way round and it became a sword with which we use to subdue and conquer other on the pretext of the gospel. Maybe, we have lifted the tree with both the serpent and the Son of Man alongside each other and people cannot tell exactly what gospel we are proclaiming. By the serpent, alongside the Son of Man it means pushing any other convictions, cultural, religious, political, economic, and scientific, and offering them as competing alternatives for the salvation of mankind beside the redemptive work accomplished by God through the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Lastly, let us also be encouraged that we interrogate the portrait of Christ we may like seeing hanging on the Cross we are lifting. We should ascertain whether or not it is offensive to our common humanity because maybe it subtly celebrates legacies of injustice, and a culture of dominating others.

Now comes Easter; in which way will we lift the cross, what portrait of the Son of Man will we lift, and how will it draw people to it?

*Rev'd Kurauone Mutimwii*



## Church Services in April

For those unable to attend church in person the service will be on zoom. The Zoom link each week will remain the same and is as follows:

**Meeting ID: 864 1569 9327**

**Passcode: 490926**

The services will start at **10.00am**

The services in April will be led by the following people:

**Sunday 7th April** -Linda Rayner - communion

**Sunday 14th April** - Sue Matthews

**Sunday 21st April** - Linda Rayner

**Sunday 28th April** - Hilary Grierson

## Lunch and Chat

We are holding an Easter (couple of days after) Lunch and Chat, it will be a roast dinner. On



**Wednesday 3rd April** usual time of **12.45** with a 1pm serving.

Come along and maybe bring a friend. Everyone is welcome.

*Elaine*

## Friendly Cuppa Time



This month's meeting is **Wednesday**

**24th April 10am - 12pm** Last month

we had a bumper turn out, feel free to bring someone along.

*Elaine*

## Working together as One Body

Stuart spoke about it at the Church Meeting

I think what we have perhaps failed to grasp, is that going back is not an option. But we can build on the things that have shaped us. We can learn from them.

As we look at the changing role of ministers and the work they do, we are realising that ministry is something that we can all do, without calling it ministry. We all have a ministry and although some of us don't class what we do as ministry – but it is. By realising this, you can learn that ministry is not a word intended to frighten people. It is a word accompanied by action that we all do as part of our everyday lives. When we as a group of people work with others on community events and we talk to people who come to such events, not only is it ministry but also mission.

If you look at Paul's letters to Timothy, you will read about the whole people who made up the early church and the roles they had to play. The church was planted by an apostle (which means 'sent one') and then left for the Deacons, Elders and overseers to manage the church and share the good news. It was not the role of the apostle to stay and do all the tasks. The tasks were shared out according to the skills people brought to the table. If you look at Ephesians Ch 4 verses 11-13, it talks

about how we are called according to our gifts. I pray that we can all recognise our God given gifts and use them as he calls us - as the body of Christ.

Working together for the Kingdom we can achieve great things.

*Elaine*

## **Eco Church**

As I announced we have formally been awarded our Bronze Status.

I know that some people think the whole thing not just of ECO Church but of recycling etc in general is a load of nonsense, but for those that don't agree with that then we should be proud of ourselves.

However, there is more we can do. In Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme we cannot recycle the plastic tops off bottles and containers, so we have to take them off and put them in the general waste bin, for anyone who didn't realise this, what happens if you don't remove them, then depending on the percentage of non-recyclable items off the lorry then the whole lorry load could end up in general waste and therefore none of it is recycled. So such a waste.

So they need to come off, if you want you can bring them to me in Church as some areas do recycle, also I know someone who collects them and melts them down to make things.

Genesis 2:15. Humans are commanded to care for God's creation

*Elaine*

Elaine has done a fantastic job getting us our Bronze Status. Well done

*Sue*

## **Minutes of Church Meeting**

The Church Meeting was held on 3rd March 2024.

**Welcome** – Stuart Young (chairman) opened the meeting with a few words from Corinthians which refers to us all belonging to one body with many parts. We are all part of a sharing community which is decreasing in numbers. Volunteering is quite a commitment but we do need help in order to keep moving

forward. A plea for help in any capacity was made. This was followed by an opening prayer.

30 members were present along with 1 adherent.

**Minutes-** The minutes of the church meeting held on 3rd December 2023 were approved and signed.

**Matters Arising** - None

**Financial Statement for 2023-** Joe James presented a statement of financial activities for the year ending 31st December 2023. Copies were distributed to those attending.

**Income** There are two areas of funding

1. Unrestricted
2. Restricted. The only restricted funds we have, are for the payment of the Mission Worker's salary.

Joe went on to explain some of the notes on page 4 of the statement.

### **Income**

1. **Collections and Donations.** These came to £39,073 although giving was down (fewer members) but donations were up. 2022 showed a similar income of £38,176 .

Tom Swan was thanked for his work in doing the tax return for the Inland Revenue which gives us our tax rebate on giving. And also for his advice to Joe.

2. **Other Activities** Room hire was up to £19,341 from £14,866 in 2022 Sue Vernon was thanked for all her hard work in doing so well with bookings. This is a 30% growth. Total income from other all activities was £20,421

3. **Investments** Interest on these stand at £2,704 up from £1,967 in 2022, due to better interest rates.

**Total Income** This came to **£62,198** down from £76,484 in 2022.

### **Expenditure**

1. **Ministry M&M** came to £27,588, down from £36,336 in 2022 due to falling numbers. Along with pulpit supply the total came to £30,943. In addition was the designated Mission Worker's salary of £13,475 up from £7,200 in

2022 partly due to back payments which were owed. Overall total ministry spend was £44,418

2. **Church** £21,081 was spent down from £80,896 in 2022. (No large capital spends) This coming year the roof may lead to more expenditure going forward.

3. **Charitable Giving** This was in line with 2022 coming in at £4,072

**Total Expenditure** This was **£69,571** (£131,757 in 2022)

**Total Unrestricted Funds** These stand at £62,198. £12,000 was drawn down from Synod Mission Fund. With the movement of funds and in interest on investments a net profit of £172 was shown for the year.

Total funds carried forward came to **£182,970**

Joe gave an explanation of our assets which do not include the church buildings which are in the name of U.R.C. trustees. 2 years of Manse funds are still available. A query was raised as to why the fund decreased by £35,000 in 2022 when it is only meant for a mission salary. Joe is going to look into it.

Joe was thanked for all his hard work. As he is stepping down at the end of this year we will need to appoint a new Treasurer. A church must have a nominated Treasurer. Joe has done a terrific job over the years and the meeting thanked him.

## Updates from Elaine

### Bramhall News

1. **C.T.iB. Praise in the Park** This is provisionally arranged for Sunday 21st July.

2. **Woodford Summer Festival** (organised by the Woodford community. C.T.iB.W have been asked to man a stall and hand out leaflets about all the churches 'activities.

3. **The Mill** It is now not being used very much. The 2 part time workers have also left so relies on volunteers. Now C.T.iB.W are looking at its future prospects. Has the need now gone? There is a thriving 'Christians in School' group at Bramhall High School. Do we perhaps move all the activities there?

### Partnership News

1. **Ordination Service** Steph will be ordained on Saturday 28th September at Gatley.

2. **Manses** Pastor K's manse is still going through in the Heatons. This now the third property they've gone for through no fault of theirs or Synod

Steph's family have looked at a prospective manse in Cheadle Hulme. Hopefully this can be completed by September.

3. **Money from Altrincham** The Steering Group is drawing up an action plan for the use of the monies donated by Altrincham U.R.C..

### Our Church News

1. **Community Audit.** Elaine has a meeting this month with them, to look at what is going on outside the churches in the local community. Where could we join in?

2. **Maundy Service** This will be held at 8pm. at Cheadle Hulme URC.

3. **Joint Meeting with Cheadle Hulme. and Heald Green to Discuss the Future.** All agree joining together would be a good idea but no one is prepared to give up their church. We could hold more joint services and events together but we must be prepared to travel to the other churches. The other two churches bring more people to services at our church, than we send to theirs.

4. **Rucksack Appeal** This is ongoing throughout Lent and is for Wellspring

### Safeguarding Updates

1. **Incidents** Nothing to report

2. **Good Practice 6** This now out. The letting contracts for Hirers have been tweaked ready for implementation. We have to adapt thing to suit us.

3. **G.D.P.R.** Stuart and Jackie are going to look at this again next week

Elaine was thanked for all her hard work in many areas.

**A.O.B.** - None.

The meeting closed with everyone saying The Grace.

*Helen Beattie*

## Church Family and Friends

### Thank You Message from Edith Pickin

Thank you very much for my flowers, which opened up beautifully. They were very much appreciated. Best wishes to everybody, hope everyone is keeping well.

*Edith*

### Thank You Message from Howard Fox

I would like to thank everyone for their kindness following the passing of Norma. As a family, we greatly appreciate all the cards and kind words and the knowledge that so many people held Norma in such high regard.

Many people were incredibly helpful in making Norma's day the special celebration it turned out to be. Thank you

I would also like to thank members of my own family who have been so supportive at this difficult time for us all.

Finally, thank you for the generous donations to Macmillan and Trefoil; it is wonderful that such a large number of people have contributed.

*From a very grateful Howard*

We continue to remember all those in our fellowship who are experiencing health problems, worries and sadness over loved ones. We hold them all in our prayers.

*Sue*

## What's the Big Idea? An Introduction to the Books of the Bible

### This month we consider Deuteronomy & Joshua



The setting for these books is Israel's entry into the promised land after 40 years of wanderings in the wilderness. Deuteronomy gives us Moses' addresses on the plains of Moab, as the Israelites prepare to enter Canaan. The book of Joshua recounts the crossing of the Jordan and the victories that give the people control of Canaan.

The theme of Deuteronomy is God's covenant and his call for His people's obedience, loyalty and love. The 'shema' (Heb: 'hear'), expresses this response to God: *'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be'*

The book contains instruction on how to live intentionally as God's people in response to His love and mercy. Total loyalty to God is also crucial, with the worship of any other gods being totally rejected. It is also widely quoted in the NT eg. Jesus' temptations (Deut. 8:3, 6:13, 16).

The book of Joshua, with its description of the conquest of the land and the destruction of cities and peoples, reminds us that God's love and purposes for us are worked out in the messes, storms and sins of our daily lives. As God says Joshua: *'Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.'* (Joshua 1:9).

Joshua ('The Lord saves') is the same name as Jesus Himself. Jesus overcame all powers of evil to bring God's people into their eternal 'rest' (Heb 4:1-11).

*Canon Paul Hardingham for Parish Pump*

## Quiz on Joshua

1. Whom did Joshua succeed as leader of Israel?  
Jacob  
Aaron  
Moses
2. What was the name of Joshua's father?  
Carmi  
Nun  
Eleazar
3. To what city did Joshua send two men to spy upon?  
Jericho  
Ai  
Gilgal
4. What was the name of the woman who hid the spies Joshua sent?

Rachel  
Rahab  
Rebekah

5. How many stones did the Israelites take from the dry river bed of the Jordan?

7  
12  
40

6. Once the Israelites had entered the Promised Land, what happened in the days after they had celebrated the Passover?

God stopped providing manna  
Joshua apportioned land to each tribe  
The Amorites attacked them

7. What did the captain of the Lord's host command Joshua to do?

Gather his army against Jericho  
Build an altar to the Lord  
Take off his sandals

8. How many priests were chosen to carry the rams' horns as they marched round Jericho?

3  
7  
70

9. What was the name of the man who violated God's command not to plunder anything from Jericho?

Phinehas  
Zabdi  
Achan

10. The Gibeonites tricked Joshua into making a covenant of peace, but as what did he make them serve the Israelites?

Woodcutters and water-carriers  
Brick makers and messengers  
Stone-carriers and armour-bearers

11. What natural phenomenon helped Joshua defeat the Amorites?

Sandstorm  
Earthquake  
Hailstones

12. What was the only tribe not to receive an inheritance?

Levi  
Reuben  
Manasseh

**Answers next month!**

## Missional Partnership Prayer Calendar



Each Church has prepared a prayer for you. The prayers are not designed to be for a specific event, they are about the general life and mission of the Church so they can be used in any month. This month it is our prayer.

This month we pray for Rev'd Kurauone Mutimwii

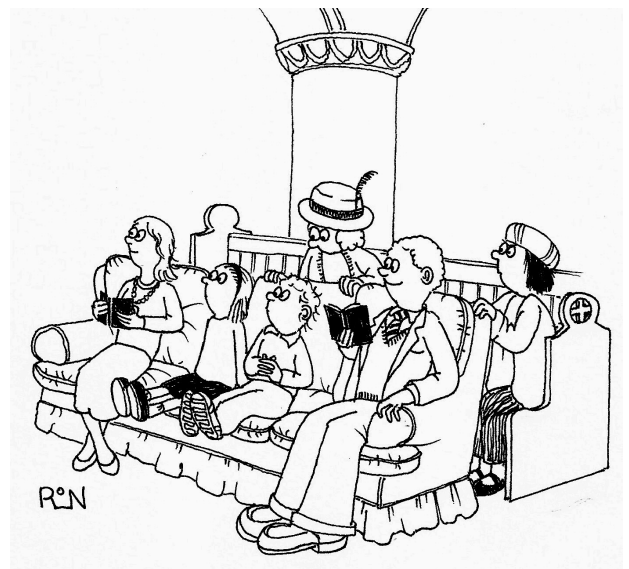
We give grateful thanks for Revd Kurauone Mutimwii, for his experience, his pastoral skills, his dedication and his support to our congregations.

We ask you to help him lead us, find new ways to be Church and pray that you would be with him in every situation as he works together with us in building the Kingdom.

And we pray for his family, for their gifts and creativity, for their understanding and support and for their journey together at this time. May they feel welcome and loved in your Church community.

For all your blessings we ask this.

**Amen**



*Regular worshippers were upgraded to first class*

# The Lectionary Readings for April 2024

The readings may not always correspond with those chosen by our preachers, but this information could be used for personal reading.



Sue Matthews

Week beginning	First reading and Psalm	Alternative first reading and Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
April 7th 2024	Acts 4:32-35	Psalm 133	1 John 1:1-2:2	John 20:19-31
April 14th 2024	Acts 3:12-19	Psalm 4	1 John 3:1-7	Luke 24:36b-48
April 21st 2024	Acts 4:5-12	Psalm 23	1 John 3:16-24	John 10:11-18
April 28th 2024	Acts 8:26-40	Psalm 22:25-31	1 John 4:7-21	John 15:1-8

## Prayer Corner

Please let me know if you would like any specific prayers added to our prayer corner each month. Sue Matthews

Please pray for the people of Gaza who are facing famine

Please pray for those in our fellowship who are unwell

Please pray for those who have lost a loved one

Please pray for the people in Haiti as law and order breaks down

Please pray for the people of the Ukraine, Palestine and Israel as the fighting continues

Please pray for the people who will benefit from our Rucksack Appeal

# Crossword Challenge

## Across

- 8 'He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the — ' (Isaiah 53:12) (13)  
 9 'When they had sung a hymn, they went — to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30) (3)  
 10 Comes between Galatians and Philipians (9)  
 11 'Your heart will — and swell with joy' (Isaiah 60:5) (5)  
 13 Muslim holy month (7)  
 16 Ten ears (anag.) (7)  
 19 Under (poetic abbrev.) (5)  
 22 How Abram described himself to God when he complained that his inheritance would pass to a servant (Genesis 15:2) (9)  
 24 'Go to the — , you sluggard' (Proverbs 6:6) (3)  
 25 Debar from receiving Communion (13)

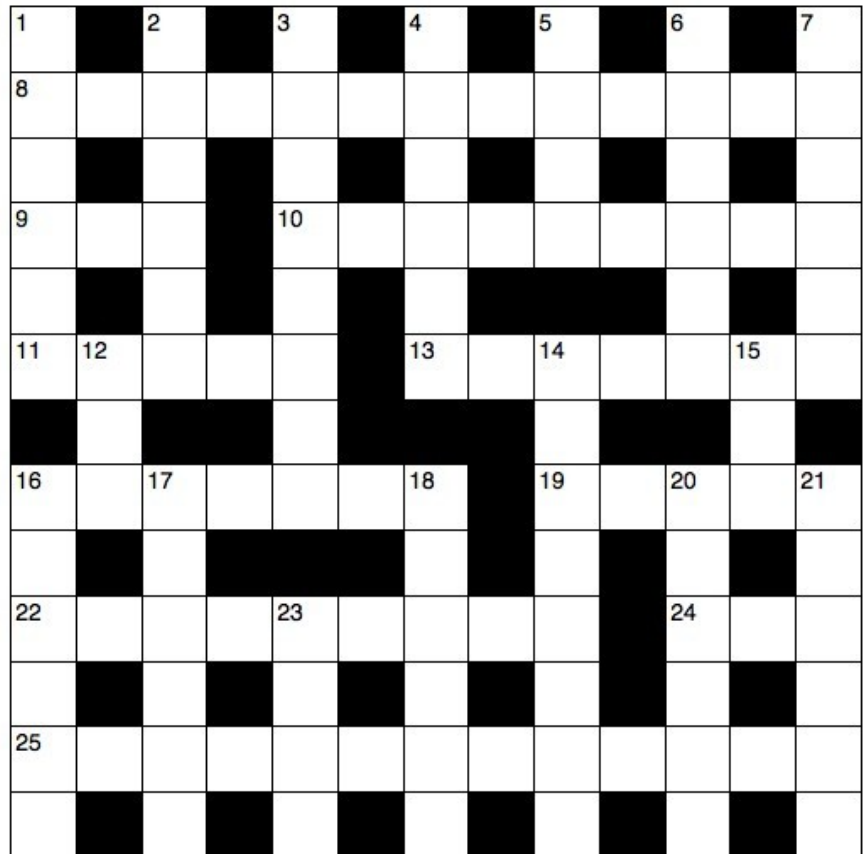
## Down

- 1 My — for His Highest (Oswald Chambers' best-known book) (6)  
 2 Festival of the resurrection (6)  
 3 His sons will prepare for war and — a great army' (Daniel 11:10) (8)  
 4 Let not the — string his bow' (Jeremiah 51:3) (6)  
 5 Name of the River Thames in and around Oxford (4)  
 6 'From then on Judas watched for an opportunity — — him over' (Matthew 26:16) (2,4)  
 7 'But Christ is faithful — — — over God's house' (Hebrews 3:6) (2,1,3)  
 12 Long-handled implement used to till the soil (Isaiah 7:25) (3)  
 14 Order to which monks and nuns devote themselves (8)  
 15 Appropriate (Proverbs 15:23) (3)  
 16 I, uncle (anag.) (6)  
 17 'They gave him — — of broiled fish' (Luke 24:42) (1,5)  
 18 'Weren't there three men that we — — and threw into the fire?' (Daniel 3:24) (4,2)

20 Mountain where Noah's ark came to rest (Genesis 8:4) (6)

21 'Don't you know that friendship with the world is — towards God?' (James 4:4) (6)

23 Prominent architectural feature of large cathedrals such as St Paul's (4)



## Answers March 2024

**Across:** 1, Wine. 3, The alert. 8, Ooze. 9, Passover. 11, Garden Tomb. 14, Cannot. 15, Elisha. 17, Gethsemane. 20, Own house. 21, Lisa. 22, Flogging. 23, Style.

**Down:** 1, Wrong act. 2, Nazarene. 4, Health. 5, Assemblies. 6, Envy. 7, Turn. 10, Before long. 12, Iscariot. 13, Take care. 16, The Son. 18, Loaf. 19, Unto.

**NEWS & VIEWS** is published on the last Sunday of each month. The deadline for the next issue is:

**SUNDAY 14th April**

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