

Window on the Moor



September/October 2020

A Celebration
10 years as Heaton Moor
United Church

Welcome

*It is 10 years since we came together and
walked down Heaton Moor Road as one
church*

*This magazine has brought together old
and new members of the church and their
thoughts about this celebration .*

Enjoy

One more step along the world I go,

One more step along the world I go.

Peter Williams's thoughts shared at the last service at Heatons United Reformed Church

I have been asked to spend a few moments reflecting on what the Heatons United Reformed Church has achieved since its formation and where it finds itself now

It is tempting to describe it as a journey but Tony Blair has beaten me too it and his wife is a lawyer.

The short version is that we have been the Heatons United Reformed Church.

We don't usually spend too much time wondering what the United Reformed Church is. But, if we think about it, we have been true to it's founding principles – The URC was established to change and we have changed, if you look back over the last 20 years we have changed a lot.

Sometimes change has occurred in significant steps, merging congregations, altering the buildings but mostly change has been a continuous process in an attempt to meet the changing needs of the Church and those we serve.

We have been an active and I hope effective presence in the local community and just by being here we have provided opportunities for Christian fellowship and worship.

We have cared for our members pretty well, not just through the pastoral care scheme but all members of the church caring for each other.

We have supported local causes and looked further afield by developing relationships with the Christian community in Palestine and more recently through the Oak Tree Foundation we have supported families in Romania. It has also been good to be able to support a schools worker through the Heatons Churches Partnership.

When we were talking to our Methodist friends about what we want the new church to be known for, somebody said it should provide really good worship. That seemed a good ambition because worship is perhaps the one thing that brings us all together and refreshes us week by week.



The Heatons United Reformed Church has done worship quite well, led not only by our ministers but a wide range of visiting preachers as well. Worship includes hymns of course, we must have sung over 6000 in the last 20 years – but we have sung some more than once!

From the old things to the new

Keep me travelling along with you.

We still use the old favourites but the repertoire has changed to include newer ones as well.

Last week our closing hymn was number 574 the oldish rousing “Go forth and Tell O Church of God awake.... ” which was very appropriate after we had been addressed by the schools worker who we support.

But I opened my hymnbook at 547 by mistake, and found the second verse which could have been written to describe our situation

Don't get too set in your ways the Lord says Each

step is only a phase the Lord says

I'll go before you and I will be a sign to guide my travelling wandering race

You're the people, of God

Not being too set in our ways has brought us to the present time and perhaps the biggest change we have ever embarked on. We have made a very brave decision but having made it we now have the opportunity to continue our witness in the community. We will take our traditions with us and develop new ones as the process of change, a defining characteristic of the URC, continues.

When the 2 URC churches merged 20 years ago we became stronger, we carried on doing the same things and we did them better. This time we will again be stronger but rather than doing the same things better we will also be challenged to discover different ways of Christian expression.

None of us know exactly what the Heaton Moor United Church will be doing 10 or 20 years from now but we can be encouraged by the final words of the hymn.

The Lord says

His love will strengthen us as we go along

For we are his travelling wandering race we're the people of God

We have been the people of God in the Heaton's United Reformed Church and we will be the people of God in the Heaton Moor United Church.

Exciting times or what?

Have they been exciting times or did it stay the same?

Can we make it exciting for another 10 years ?

And it's from the old I travel to the new.

Keep me travelling along with you



'Betty Allport's thoughts'

The Church is not a building, but 'The people in it'. How many times

have we heard that said?

But when The Church has been a big part of your life for over 65 years, the building and the people are fused together.

St. Andrews was my second home. I knew every corner. I had known the designer and architect - a respected Elder of our Church.

As I looked at each pew, those lovely wooden pews with their rich blue velvety runners, I could call to mind the people and families that had worshipped there week by week. 'People who had shaped my life'.

The magnificent pipe organ, its keyboard locked behind wooden shutters- how thrilling to see the organist bring it to life, when he slid onto the long seat and arranged his feet carefully on the numerous wooden keys down below.

I was mesmerised.

I loved the clean uncluttered decor - the natural bricks that formed the walls and pillars, directing one's gaze towards the intriguing stained glass windows and the central, solid Communion table at the front. It all helped to direct my thoughts to worship- a sense of expectation and calm.

As a small girl, I sat in the body of the church, graduating, when a teenager, to the balcony or back rows of the building.

The day I became a Member, I stood nervously at the foot of the steps and when ordained as an Elder, I sat in the choir stalls ready to assist with Communion.

Wherever I sat, the building revealed more and more of itself. In each stage of my growing up the building became more familiar as I surveyed it from different angles. I dearly loved that building. the style and dignity of worship and the fellowship of love all around.

Sadly, the day the doors finally shut, much of this changed. A number of people went to other churches nearer their homes. Fortunately, I was on holiday at the time,

So, it was relatively easy to walk into our NEW Church on my return. For a while, I felt like a visitor, quite comfortable and excited with the challenge - A NEW CHURCH.

What had God got in store for us? Where was He leading us?

10 years down the line.....

'Our church has become a Church for the Community.

We are changing, developing, learning, loving all the time.

We thank God and pray that we will listen to how He is guiding us into the next ten years.'

*Round the corners of the world I turn,
More and more about the world I learn.*

HEATON MOOR UNITED CHURCH - 10TH ANNIVERSARY

In 1934 we were both christened in St Andrew's Presbyterian Church of England, Heaton Moor.



In 1972 the Presbyterian Church of England united with the Congregational Church in England and Wales to become the United Reformed Church, a church with aspirations to move to further acts of union. Shortly afterwards St Andrew's united with Heaton Moor United Reformed (formerly Congregational) Church to become the Heatons URC.

We have always been strongly drawn to the urgent need for Christians to move ever more closely together. So we felt moved to become deeply involved in the talks which led to the uniting of the Heatons URC and Heaton Moor Methodist Church to form Heaton Moor United Church.

The reason for our leaving the church was that, during our married life, we had moved away from Heaton Moor and, as we neared our eighties, it seemed sensible to enter more fully into life in High Lane. However, we have followed the activities of the church with interest, and so we were delighted to hear that the 10th Anniversary of the union is to be celebrated and very privileged to be asked to make a contribution to these memories.

We send our best wishes to you all and we pray for your continuing life and fellowship, both within the congregation and in your Christian care for the community in which you live and serve. May God guide and bless you all.

Gill and Hartley Oldham.

All the new things that I see

You'll be looking at along with me.

So, it has been 10 years since The Heaton's URC and Heaton Moor Methodist Church joined together and formed a new church, Heaton Moor United Church. For me, it was a real joy and great fun being one of the first ministers, along with Stuart Radcliffe. Getting there wasn't always straightforward, though...Getting the constitution right was tedious at times, but important to make sure we didn't have any knots to unravel as we grew together.

There is a big theological difference between the Methodist and the Reformed traditions – but theology was never an issue. Neither was worship – both our worship styles were similar and you all seemed open to trying new things. No, church governance was the big issue. The Methodist Church has a strong sense of belonging to a Circuit and a national set up. The URC has a strong sense of local responsibility and accountability. Plus, the Methodist Church has an unusual legal set-up. I really learned to value the support of the Circuit, so we didn't feel isolated and on our own. But I also learned to value the Church Meeting, getting the mind of the church as we try to listen to the Holy Spirit.

But church life is what is really interesting. How to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ in the Heaton's? Worshipping with you all has always been a real joy – using the skills and abilities we have to praise the God we know in Jesus Christ, and to try to understand our faith better. Then, reaching out in the community. The Friday Dementia drop was always a delight to, well, drop in on – and as well as supporting families with dementia, it unites the

community in volunteering and working together. The work down the road with 'The Plough' was exciting. Giving out coffee during Holy Week meant that we met people we wouldn't usually meet, and gave us a chance to demonstrate why Lent and Easter matter to us Christians. 'No Holds Barred' was fun, and something I've tried to repeat here in Wrexham, at the University. gave us a chance to hear the views of people we might disagree with – and that has to be good. The Carol Concerts were a real highlight.

One thread that is common to all of this is pastoral care. It's something churches ought to be good at, and I certainly experienced real care from you all when Sue was ill. But pastoral care beyond our circle is important. A Roman Emperor complained 'these blooming Christians; they care for their widows and orphans – and they care for ours as well!'

I still keep an eye on things that are happening. 'Moor than...' seems a great idea. The pandemic has brought so many things to a shuddering halt, but churches up and down the country are finding new ways to serve, and to present the Good News.

May God continue to bless you all – and guide you so that you do things that God can bless.

Rev Richard Parkes



And it's from the old I travel to the new.

Keep me travelling along with you.



Dear
Friends,

Greetings in
the name of
Jesus Christ
- on this the
tenth

anniversary of the formation of Heaton Moor United Church. Time is a funny thing - it doesn't seem that long since we walked together down the main street in Heaton Moor to join in the first time of worship as a United Church. And yet, when I think of all that has happened since then, God has been doing some wonderful things. I was asked to share a little about where I am now. Ten years ago I was heading into my final year at Northern College as a URC ministerial student, and on placement with Stuart Radcliffe in Heaton Moor and Edgeley. Around a year later I was ordained as minister of The United Church in Rhyl in North Wales, and I remember many friends from Heaton Moor joining us on that occasion. Shortly afterwards, Jo and I welcomed Rachel into the world (who is now nearly 9!!!). Slowly, over time, God has used us to develop a pastoral ministry here in Rhyl, built around our worship together and our teaching and preaching. Quite a bit of the last ten years have been taken up developing the work of a new centre at the church in Rhyl - the ASK Centre. This Centre initially involved a £750,000 re-development of the building, and in partnership with

Citizen's Advice, we are now able to provide a foodbank, drop-in cafe, community facilities and space for other partners to work. Obviously in the last 6 months things have looked very different, but our foodbank continues to provide for some of the most in need in our community. The preaching and the practical ministry offered by the church here are real tangible signs of God's Kingdom being built here in North Wales. Looking back to ten years ago, I remember two things - first, the desire for the URC and Methodist congregations to come together from a position of strength, so that; secondly, there could be a shared passion to see God's Kingdom be built and folk in your community to know the love and Gospel of Jesus Christ. Those two things have stayed with me - and inspired me: churches are more effective and effective in mission when the fellowship they share is strong; and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is powerful to bring grace and love in people in lives across our community. I thank God for the opportunity we had to journey together for those significant time, and for what you had given me for my current ministry. I wish you all well for the future, and pray that you would continue in strong fellowship and mission to Heaton Moor, to the glory of name of Jesus Christ.

Rev. Paul Robinson

As I travel through the bad and good

Keep me travelling the way I should.



One of the things I missed most about teaching was working alongside people and developing their talents. Encouraging and developing young people to discovering things they were good at. Having trained at Luther King House in Manchester, I knew the system of church placements as a way of learning for new ministers. One of the most enjoyable periods of my ministry was working with a succession of Student Ministers on their Church Placements. Kate Gray, Mike Walsh and Kate Gray together, Stuart Radcliffe and Paul

Robinson. I then suggested to College that Stuart would be a good person to place Paul Robinson with for his final placement and you all had the wonderful experience of Stuart and Paul working together with you here in Heaton Moor. The dream team...one even supported City the other United.

One of the most rewarding feelings is watching someone develop and being able to provide a supportive, creative environment for that to happen...Heaton Moor United Church are a caring, kindly and loving Community...which I was proud to be part of.

The short time I spent as your minister gave me an insight into the pastoral care and dedication (often behind the scenes) shown by many groups within the church. I gained much from Study Groups and the fellowship of More than a Good Read...which has continued. Memories of services with you where I was once again able to teach, so thank you all and keep sharing God's Love....Peace Revd Paul Brewerton

Where I see no way to go

You'll be telling me the way, I know.

When Sharon contacted me to say that it had been 10 years since the two congregations came together to form Heaton Moor United Church, I could hardly believe it.

I remember talking with Peter Williams just before we joined together who said to me that 'That when the two URC's had joined many years earlier they were able to do the same things as before but better, however, this time we need to come together to do new things' and I believe that he was correct.

Not too long after that, during a leadership team away day I felt God offered to us the text from Jeremiah 29. A passage of scripture that I believe was intended to turn our focus from looking inward to what was happening within our church. Instead it encouraged us to cast our eyes to the wider community. It was very much a passage of scripture to encourage the mission of the church.

Jeremiah is talking to a community that felt forgotten, perhaps even irrelevant in the new landscape in which they found themselves. Don't give up he tells them, instead of longing for what was, concentrate, pray and work for the good of where you are. In other words, don't just do what you have been doing but find new ways to share the joy of knowing Jesus with those you live alongside.

Unbeknown to me at the time this was the beginning of a journey that God was taking me on. I had always wondered how I would know when it was the right time to leave a church and a community that I had both loved and felt privileged to serve and be part of.



At the service that saw the two churches join we sang 'Moses I know you're the man' with the chorus 'we're a travelling wandering race, the people of God'. God was gently moving me as well. The people I was lucky enough to minister alongside and the experiences gained through doing so shaped me and prepared me for where God has called me now and for that I will be forever grateful.

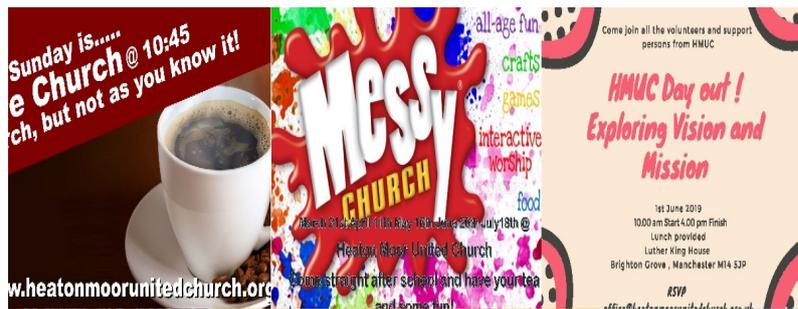
My job now is to encourage the United Reformed Churches across Mersey Synod to find ways to connect with their communities just like we did in Heaton Moor. To encourage the people who are part of them to see the impact that they can have sharing their faith, by loving their neighbours, by simple acts of kindness done in the name of faith.

And it's from the old I travel to the new.

Keep me travelling along with you.

Church is never the destination that we should be encouraging people to arrive at but rather the starting point that takes people into a deeper and more joyous relationship with God. A relationship that has the power to not only transform us but to also transform the communities that we are all part of.

May God bless the next 10 years of your lives together as you ever obediently seek God's will for your church and for your lives. God Bless Stuart.



*Give me courage when the world is rough,
Keep me loving though the world is tough.*



Reflections on Heaton Moor United Church

I'd been wandering lost for some time before I was called to find church again, and I admit I came to Heaton Moor knowing almost nothing about methodism. I think my surface knowledge was that you were somehow a more-strict and yet more laidback version of CofE simultaneously!

Anyway, like everything these days I discovered Heaton Moor online, and appreciating the churches listed values, and the Sunday late morning start, I decided to pluck up the courage to give it a go.

I admit I was nervous ahead of my visit, not being a friend of an attendee or the average demographic. However, I found my first visit really positive. I was welcomed by several people (who

know who they are!). It made all the difference to other churches I'd tried in the past, and ensured I came back again, and again.

One thing that perhaps you all take for granted but that I particularly love is the variety and scope of speakers, hymns and prayers that being part of a local community circuit brings. It keeps me thinking about God in different ways and in your daily life.

I was 'encouraged' me into a bible study class, which I suspect was more for my benefit than others, and through it have deepened my spiritual journey as well as made firm friends for life.

The last six months have changed everything, but I pray we will soon be able to sing together again, and share a coffee. Heaton Moor is lucky to have such a modern adaptable space that could in the future (with a modernization or two, I'd not seen a frieze since 1997!) become a central community space, as well as Christian worship space for the Heaton.

Mike Ball

*Leap and sing in all I do,
Keep me travelling along with you.*



HMUC

I was baptised at St Joseph's Catholic church in Reddish in the mid 50s.

I asked Jesus to come into my life as my Saviour in the late 70s.

I was confirmed at All Saints Anglican church in Thelwall in the early 80s.

I moved to St Chad's Anglican church in Romiley in the mid 80s, where I was completely at home.

I moved into Cheadle Hulme in 2003 and it was suggested I visit Cheadle Hulme Methodist Church, which was home immediately.

I had sensed God calling me to preach for some time and this is where my Local Preacher training was completed.

I moved to Reddish 2017 and was in a quandary about leaving church family once again and it

took me a while to rip myself away from Cheadle Hulme. I was encouraged to visit HMUC in 2019 and it immediately felt like home! Thank you so much for your wonderful warm welcome, which I now know is completely characteristic of HMUC!

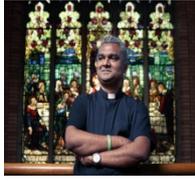
I have been a Catholic, an Anglican, a Methodist and I am now a member of an LEP church. I love the fact that, like myself, many of the HMUC family are also of mixed heritage, whether it be URC, Methodist, whatever..... the whole is so much more than the sum of the parts.

In fact, I'm so completely at home here, that I'm planning to move to Heaton Moor by the end of 2020.

Carol Jack

And it's from the old I travel to the new.

Keep me travelling along with you.



Celebrating a decade of God's faithfulness as a church

Come September 2020, it will be ten years of our being a united church, united as one in the body of Christ as Methodists and United Reformed Church.

All thanks and praise be to God for our Heaton Moor United Church (HMUC), for ten years of continued and sustained witness to the faith in Jesus Christ in the Heaton and for ten years of celebrating unity affirming and respecting our diversities. Thanks to all those people who worked tirelessly in bringing together both the denominations, and to the cloud of witnesses who kept their faith in keeping our church move forward. Let me place on record a deep sense of gratitude for all those ministers, leadership teams, and several others in leadership and staff roles for their contributions to this our church. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate our HMUC, all its members and the community with which we are engaging for keeping the mantle of witness throughout this decade.

Personally, it is a delight for me to be at our church as a minister at this juncture of celebrating a decade of God's faithfulness in unity and witness. Being with our church for the last three years, there are many things that I appreciate in our church, but there are two things I need to flag up which I see as the strengths of our church. Firstly, a deep commitment of the church for justice and peace issues. For us as a church, faith in Jesus Christ has to be employed creatively and contemporarily in the public sphere, and our HMUC has always risen to the occasion be it in its engagements with Christian Aid, Action for Children, All We Can, Leprosy Mission, or in choosing a local and international charity to support or in its involvements with Dementia Drop In or in its passion for eco-justice issues. In the decades to come we need to continue our engagements with our local community and with the contextual issues of justice and peace. Secondly, an openness for inclusion with a special focus on margins. I really appreciate our church's openness, in striving to understand the issues of refugees, in its openness to support programmes addressing hunger and poverty. I also need to show appreciation for the theological openness of our church for inclusion, where all means all are included in the vision for God's love to all. I was very pleased for our church's openness for 'God in Love, Unite us' report and for ensuring that no one should be excluded in the love of Christ and in the love for Christ. As we enter a new decade, we should make conscious efforts in including everyone in the love of Christ.

In a way, my vision for our Church will be on the one hand to continue this commitment for justice and peace, and in striving for inclusion with a preferential option for those on the margins, and on the other hand to engage in and with our local public sphere, our community, where we are called to witness the love of God for all of God's creation. On this journey forward, in fact outwards, we are called to learn as a church that we are not alone and God has not given up on us as a church, for God in Jesus the Immanuel is always working with us offering love, faith and hope. As we step into a new decade, let us be reminded that church growth is not about numbers, but is about

celebrating Christian presence in our community, and therefore we should dedicate ourselves in engaging with our community in showing our love for one another. Over the few months I have written extensively about re-imagining the church, and we are called to constantly re-imagine the being and becoming of our church, because such a re-imagining portrays a God who is dynamic, always willing to offer creative engagements with and in the community.

Let us continue to pray for one another, offering pastoral care to those who feel vulnerable specially during these times. Church should never be a space of division between abled bodies and not so abled bodies, for that matter it should never be a site of division on any count and identity. God's love is all inclusive to all people, which is not catered based on someone's individual merit, and church should be a space offering such all-inclusive, non-discriminatory love to all people. In our movement forwards as a church, let us be reminded of Paul's words,

"But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal

concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it." (1 Corinthians 12:24-26)

Let us therefore, prayerfully enter into a new decade in our witness as Heaton Moor United Church, for God has been faithful to us and will be faithful to us in our journey as a church.

The global church reflects September every year as 'Season of Creation,' and this year the theme is 'Jubilee for the earth,' and so during September let us prayerfully reflect on God's creation and ask God to grant us strength to be faithful to God's creation.

May the grace and peace of God lead and guide us as a church in our journey forwards and outwards.

With warm regards,

Rev. Dr. Raj Bharat Patta

23rd August 2020

You are older than the world can be,

You are younger than the life in me.

Ever old and ever new,

Keep me travelling along with you.

And it's from the old I travel to the new.

Keep me travelling along with you.

Obituary



Margaret Dawson 1927-2020

Margaret Dawson was born in Stechford, Birmingham on 1st May 1927. She was an undiagnosed non-identical twin. Her twin sister, Barbara, died more than 30 years ago. Barbara and Margaret were evacuated to a farm in Herefordshire at the beginning of the Second World War. Their older brother, Robert, joined the RAF and was killed in action aged 21, just 6 weeks after his marriage. Back in Birmingham Margaret trained first as a secretary and then as a nurse. She then trained as a midwife in Edinburgh and worked for a while in Stirling. Her mother became unwell and so she moved back to Birmingham. She met Leslie when they were both working at Dudley Road Hospital. They were married in 1953. Margaret and Leslie then moved to Papworth, Cambridge. Jenny was born in 1954 and Sue in 1955. They then moved to Bristol in 1956 for Leslie to continue his training in chest medicine. David was born there (on Sue's first birthday).

In 1958 they moved to Heaton Moor with their three young children because Leslie's parents were becoming frail. After a year living in a cramped flat above the Eastholme GP surgery, Margaret and Leslie moved to Elms Road, their home for 54 years. Andy and Kathryn were both born in Stockport. Margaret was always busy both supporting Leslie as he established Heaton Moor Health Centre and caring for their five children.

Margaret and Leslie both came from Methodist families and had attended Methodist churches in Birmingham, Cambridge and Bristol. They joined Heaton Moor Methodist Church and Margaret played an active role particularly in the pastoral work. She was the pastoral secretary for many years and a loyal member of the Ladies' Fellowship.

At the church fairs and galas Margaret ran the coffee stall – always looking to draw new people into the rota. Her ever growing family was her most enduring love, pride and passion. She remembered everyone's birthdays and took a keen interest in their lives and careers. Yet she always had time for others; and she and Leslie tirelessly welcomed friends, old and new, into their home. They often hosted the monthly Sunday evening discussion group. In 2013 they moved to Adlington House and helped to shape that new group of older friends into a happy supportive community. Margaret continued to live there after Leslie's death in 2014. She enjoyed the prayer group, film nights and having lunch in the restaurant with friends and neighbours. Margaret became increasingly frail in recent years. When the Covid-19 lockdown began Sue moved in as her flat-mate and nursed her until her death. Kathryn also moved in for the last few weeks. Thus, Margaret achieved her wish of dying in her own bed and with her family around her.

We are all saddened by Margaret's departure from our lives – and we rejoice in the privilege of having known her and shared so many conversations. She was described as 'the mother of our church' and the church's affection was demonstrated by the number of people who came to the church car park on the day of her funeral. Raj led prayers of thanksgiving for her life and for strength and peace for all those who mourned her parting. We extend our love and sympathy to Jenny, Sue, David, Andy, Kathryn, the 12 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

Deborah Symmons