

## MESSAGE FROM THE CO-EDITOR

I hope you all had a lovely Easter this week has been very quiet considering how busy the last few weeks have been. I have spent most of my hours reviewing our Easter events and working on risk assessments for the reopening of groups and a possible Whit event.

Raj is off this week and so there is no reflection as such but I have shared my own experiences of Easter this year. Thank you to Graham, Raj and Jonny for their Easter YouTube contributions, if you haven't had chance to watch do take a moment to listen as they are incredibly interesting. Thank you to Graham for our Easter Super Sunday it was lovely to get together and share a zoom breakfast. Graham will also be doing this weeks reflection and we tank him for this.

Only a week until our building will be open for services, and as before it is essential you book. Sharon has sent the booking form by email; it is also available on the website. Should you have any problems completing the form please contact the office. We will be open for Private Prayer on Sunday between 11:00 and 12:00. In the meantime we continue to offer the following things we can all do together but apart this week;

- Take part in Tune In to God:Fridays@5:17.
- Watch the weekly reflection posted on Sunday morning on our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyhynK2FIPDTbOugBiO6D9A>
- On Thursday evening light a candle from 8pm until 9pm

Just as in the time pre-covid the team are here to answer any questions, be a listening ear or signpost to other services. Please do get in touch with us if we can be of any help.

If you have anything you would like included in the weekly notices please let me know. As always if you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact me.

*JoAnne*

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 **Heaton Moor United Church**

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WOW we are now at 95% of our target to raise £1000 for UNICEF. I'm sure we will reach our target soon!

If you would like to donate the cost of your vaccine please visit

[www.justgiving.com/heaton-moor-united-church](http://www.justgiving.com/heaton-moor-united-church)

Two doses of the COVID vaccine might be between £4-£30. If you could have afforded to buy it for yourself please celebrate your vaccination by making a donation.



MARK 12:31 love thy (global) neighbour  
**TWIN YOUR VACCINE**

Communities across the UK are being protected against COVID but across the world, there are many countries where this is impossible. It may be that they cannot afford to vaccinate their people or that their infrastructure may not even include basic refrigeration in places.

UNICEF has vast experience in delivering vaccines worldwide and so will be major partners in distributing vaccines to the very poorest in the world through their association with the COVAX programme.

Join Heaton Moor United Church in  
raising funds for UNICEF  
[www.justgiving.com/heaton-moor-united-church](http://www.justgiving.com/heaton-moor-united-church)

## Thursday Prayer



Loving God,

We place into your care all our doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers.

As we enjoy the easing of restrictions continue to give them courage of heart and strength of mind and body.

Keep them safe from harm.

May they know our deep gratitude for all they are doing to help heal those affected by coronavirus.

God of all consolation may they know your protection and peace.

Bless them in these challenging days and bless their families.

Amen

**The funeral of Rev. Anne Hunt will take place on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April.**

There will be prayers in the Church car park at 13:30.

The funeral service is taking place at Stockport Crematorium at 14:30.

At the time of writing, we do not know if the funeral service will be streamed via webcast. If we receive any information, we will of course share.



The Space At The Table project had a week off so there were no meals delivered this week. I don't know about the recipients, but I certainly missed delivering them and having our doorstep chats! Thankfully, things will return to normal next week – we have secured funding to continue the project until mid-July. We anticipate at that point that we will finish the meal service as Dementia Friends will, hopefully, be re-opening in September. This of course will be under constant review and in line with government guidelines.

## MORE THAN A EGG HUNT

On Easter Saturday we welcomed 16 families with 27 children into the Church car park for our Easter Event. Thanks to the wonderful team of volunteers, the enthusiasm of the children and the sun-shining we had a lovely afternoon playing games, making rockets, exploding eggs and hunting for our Easter story. The feedback on the day and since has been incredibly positive and I have already been asked when the next event is!



## A different Easter

Like many people my Easter this year was going to be so very very different from previous years and if I'm honest I was disappointed! In recent years we have spent Easter weekend with friends in a cottage in Wales and Easter Sunday has meant an egg hunt followed by time spent on the beach.

This year not only would there be no holiday I would also be spending part of the weekend working.

The reality of course was that we had a wonderful Easter weekend. Instead of spending the weekend with friends we spent the weekend with my parents who are usually in Europe this time of year. As for "working" is it working when you are trying to get plastic eggs to explode, being challenged to a game of bas-egg-ball by a 6 year old and generally just having a good time with families from our community?

Our Easter services were different at Church too – but the YouTube reflections starting with Deborah on Psalm Sunday, with Graham on Good Friday and Raj and Jonny on Easter Sunday were all different and insightful and I certainly learnt new things not only about historical events but also about my own Faith journey.

I have always seen Easter as a time of new beginnings and of Hope, but this year, it has been a time of Forgiveness. Last year I was hurt, hurt very badly by someone who I cared deeply about. I was hurt physically but the betrayal of trust hurt more. Forgiveness is an integral part of our Faith, it's so important it is in Our Lord's Prayer but honestly I had been struggling to forgive.

I kept telling myself I could forgive if there was a sincere apology.

I kept telling myself that forgiveness will come in time, doesn't time heal all wounds?

I kept telling myself I cannot forgive because I cannot forget.

**I was wrong** – and this Easter has shown me that.

The road to Easter for Jesus was that of anger and hatred to the point of death. But instead of unforgiveness, even in his dying breath, Jesus made a choice to forgive and it ultimately made the difference for mankind.

This Easter has helped me have a difficult conversation with God. Asking for his forgiveness for harboring my anger, resentment, and bitterness. Asking for forgiveness for silently wondering why He let this happen. Asking for forgiveness for not turning to him sooner and asking for help to forgive.

God responded – as he always does with his forgiveness and in turn that has given me the freedom to forgive.

Without the differences of this year I am sure that I would not have seen this alternative theme of Easter and so I am grateful for this. I hope that whatever differences you have experienced this year there were some positives.

I look forward to seeing some of you at Church over the coming weeks.

*JoAnne*



## Prayers from Linda



### Love

Our heavenly Father, we worship your holy name for the grace you have given to us to be a witness of another day. We thank you because you are a faithful God. We rely on your goodness to us and are humbled by the extent of your constant love for us. We say thank you Lord. This day we ask that you guide us through the various events we will engage in. Grant us your wisdom to make wise decisions only and help us be

patient with one another. Let our hearts be filled with Love for all. Provide all that we need to be comfortable this day. Let your Spirit direct us to those you want us to be of help to. Bless the air we breathe; the food we eat and the water we drink. Protect us from temptation in Jesus name. Amen

### Our Prayers

Father God, our hearts are full of prayer for our families and friends so they can feel the closeness of God's loving heart. We rely on you and know that you know each of them. Touch them with your loving care, and help them our loving Lord above. So we trust in our Lord God to comfort us when we cry, and bless the hands of the medical teams, that care for us each day and night. We wish that we could be beside you always, to hold your hand and pray. So I'm sending my love, my thoughts and my faith, to be with you our wonderful God. Amen

If anyone would like to share a Prayer with the church family, please call Linda on 07564839380 or

E-mail [lindawfleming625@gmail.com](mailto:lindawfleming625@gmail.com).



No names required because God Knows.



Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2021 – Kath Brydon

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

**Call to Worship**

**Come with joy to meet our risen Lord Jesus.  
Come with all creation to praise and glorify  
His blessed name.**

**Hymn: God is here, as we his people (STF 25)**

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here:

<https://youtu.be/QbkNXq71iis?t=4>

God is here! As we his people  
meet to offer praise and prayer,  
may we find in fuller measure  
what it is in Christ we share.  
Here, as in the world around us,  
all our varied skills and arts  
wait the coming of the Spirit  
into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us  
of our lifelong need of grace;  
here are table, font, and pulpit;  
here the cross has central place.  
Here in honesty of preaching,  
here in silence, as in speech,  
here, in newness and renewal,  
God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome  
in the Shepherd's flock and fold,  
here as bread and wine are taken,  
Christ sustains us, as of old.  
Here the servants of the Servant  
seek in worship to explore  
what it means in daily living  
to believe and to adore.

Lord of all, of Church and Kingdom,  
in an age of change and doubt,  
keep us faithful to the gospel,  
help us work your purpose out.

Here, in this day's dedication,  
all we have to give, receive:  
we, who cannot live without you,  
we adore you! We believe!

*Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)*

Let us pray together:

Gracious God, we praise and adore you. For the gift of creation, seen all around us in the beauty of springtime. For flowers, trees in bloom, for new life emerging and warm sunny days. Help us to be stewards of your creation and to help reverse the damage we have done to your beautiful world.

We thank you for the awesome gift of your Son, Jesus, who humbly walked this earth in fully human form and who died to save us. We praise you for His resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit who walks alongside us and guides and sustains us through our every waking hour. We pray through the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Today's Reading from the Old Testament**

Psalm 133

**Today's Gospel Reading:** John 20: 19-31

**Time to Reflect**

Poor Thomas, famously known as 'doubting Thomas' from the passage in John's gospel. It somehow seems a flaw in his character. However, when we remember the events leading up to the crucifixion, Peter denied Jesus and all the disciples deserted him, as Jesus had predicted they would.

In the passage, the disciples were gathered behind locked doors, they were still very

afraid of repercussions from the Jewish authorities. It's also fair to assume at this moment they didn't know what would happen next, despite the fact that Jesus had told them about his impending death and resurrection.

Another thing we aren't told, (in this gospel, but see Luke 24:11), was whether the disciples believed Mary Magdalene, the first person to see the risen Christ.

Doubt is a very human emotion, we all experience it in our lives, we doubt that we can do things, often feel doubt when we think God is asking us something which takes us out of our comfort zone.

At the time of writing this, we are awaiting an announcement which will describe the road map out of our third lockdown. Our churches are not open, worship is online or in paper form. We have had to do things which take us out of our comfort zones and many times I have had doubt over whether I am able to achieve whatever it is I am asked to do. I have found recording a message on a screen difficult, often having 7 or 8 attempts before being happy with the result.

Doubt need not always be seen as a negative emotion though, because doubt leads to questions, and ultimately to answers to those questions. Thomas doubted that the other disciples had seen Jesus, but when he finally saw Jesus, he didn't need to touch Jesus to know, he called him "My Lord and my God", he recognised who Jesus really was – God.

Jesus told the disciples that those who believe without seeing are blessed. For some of us it might happen in a short time, while for others it might take years of questioning and having those questions answered. When we reach the point of belief we can and will, with assurance recognise and call Jesus "My Lord and my God".

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

We pray for our world, for countries ravaged by war and natural disasters. We pray for those countries struggling with Covid who have little or no vaccines.

We pray for our country, for those making decisions, give them wisdom and courage to act wisely. We pray for those who are on the frontline, who are exhausted from the effects of the pandemic, give them rest.

We pray for the bereaved, especially those who haven't been able to grieve with or for loved ones. We pray for those still struggling with illness and weariness. We think of those who are anxious and afraid to go out, those who have been isolated for so long and those who are lonely.

We pray for our churches, some open, some still worshipping in other ways, help us to go forward in the way you lead us, not to just return to what we have always done.

We pray for ourselves, that we don't need a sign to believe in you, that we trust you to supply everything we need in our lives. Through our risen, redeeming Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father .....*

**Hymn: Listen to**

**<https://youtu.be/J7JdhbQ33r0?t=13> or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind**

**A prayer of blessing**

Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness. May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen (Ephesians 6: 23-24)

All Hymns reproduced under CCLi 1144191.  
Local Churches please insert CCCLi No here

## **Psalm 133**

### **The Blessedness of Unity**

A Song of Ascents.

How very good and pleasant it is

when kindred live together in unity!

It is like the precious oil on the head,

running down upon the beard,

on the beard of Aaron,

running down over the collar of his robes.

It is like the dew of Hermon,

which falls on the mountains of Zion.

For there the Lord ordained his blessing,

life for evermore.

## **John 20 19-31**

### **Jesus Appears to the Disciples**

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

### **Jesus and Thomas**

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said

to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

### **The Purpose of This Book**

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.