

Dear Heaton Moor United Church,

Easter Seasons' greetings to you all.

It was good to see some of you at church last Sunday, as we opened our church building for worship after the third lockdown. We are now open for public worship at church, and if you are planning to attend the service, kindly book in your place either by filling in the booking form on the website or by informing the church office. Thanks to Carol Jack who will be leading the service this Sunday. Our circuit online zoom services continue to be offered at 3 pm on Sundays.

Some of you have asked for garden visits, and it will be good to meet and pray with you. If you ever want a garden visit, do let us know and we can arrange for it.

This week I was at the Greater Manchester Faith Advisory Panel to discuss the priorities that the faith communities can bring in to the public sphere to work with the local authorities. It was good to be at this meeting with other faith representatives in Greater Manchester.

On Tuesday, the 27th April 2021, at 6pm Greater Manchester Citizens UK Assembly is taking place, where the mayoral candidates will be attending to answer specific questions regarding the development of Greater Manchester. As members of Manchester and Stockport Methodist District, we are all members of the Citizens UK, and therefore we are invited to join this Assembly for our wider community participation. You can book a place on this link: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/citizens-uk-greater-manchester-assembly-2021-2?s=08>

Herewith I am sending you the reflection for this week and the worship resources for your kind perusal.

Can I kindly request you to uphold India and many other countries as the second wave of the pandemic has hit really hard, with beds in the hospitals unavailable, oxygen tanks and vaccine shortages, infection rates surging and deaths increasing.

May the peace of our risen Jesus Christ be with us all.

Thanking you all,

Regards,

Raj

23rd April 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-EDITOR

Another week gone by - it was lovely to see so many people on Sunday as we opened the building for worship once more. We joined Raj and Jonnie in another thought-provoking conversation which can also be found on our YouTube channel.

It's been a week of meetings for me; I joined with other lay employees from across the region on Tuesday, had a meeting about developing our School Pantry project on Wednesday and an event about engaging our communities on Thursday.

Linda is on annual leave for the next two weeks so please contact the office if you require any pastoral care.

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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Office Opening

JoAnne and I are returning to the office :

Monday 10-2

Tuesday 10-2

Wednesday 10-2

Thursday Closed

Friday 10-1

These are the core hours when you should be able to get in touch with one of us



Thursday Prayer

Healing for our World

Our Heavenly Father, we come to you, for we see such turmoil in our world, and you see and know all things.

There are many people who are hurting and fearful, and who need your compassion and mercy.

You know each individual person, and your love sees no difference in race, creed, or religion.

We pray for all people to see and understand your love within them.

We pray, too, for healing for our world so one day there will be peace.

Father, use us your faithful ones, your candles, to bring light and healing to others.

In us may they see your love in our hearts and seek to know you more.

May you bring peace and love to our world. Amen

Linda Fleming, Pastoral Worker HMUC

Any Old Tech Equipment .!!!!

I have been in touch with a company that will do a one off collection of any old laptops, PC's , screens, keyboards or printers that you no longer use .

They are then either refurbished to send to charities or stripped for parts .

If I can get at least 10 items they will collect them from the Church, I have 2 so off to a good start .

Let me know if you have anything :

Sharon



TOPSY TURVY COFFEE

the next Topsy Turvy Coffee Evening will be 26th May not 28th April as previously advertised. The theme will be following the white rabbit.



Christian Aid Week 10 -16 May 2021.

STOP the climate crisis.

Climate change affects us all, however, Rose (Kenya) a 68 year old makes a six-hour round trip every other day to collect water carrying a 25 litre container so her family can farm, drink and wash.

The corona virus pandemic has made the lack of water more critical for hand washing to help keep she and her family safe from the virus.

With a reliable source of water Rose could grow fresh vegetables to feed her family and sell extra food. She walks 6 miles each day for fresh water carrying a 25 litre container.

Jean James plans to walk 6 miles a day Monday to Friday during Christian Aid Week carrying an EMPTY container.

If you'd like to sponsor her please contact her directly (if you can Gift Aid that's brilliant)

Cream Tea - That sounds good doesn't it? For a donation to Christian Aid you can have one delivered to your door by Jean and her friends. Each cream tea will consist of; 2 scones, Cornish cream, jam, tea bag.

Deliveries will take place during Christian Aid week Monday to Friday (10 to 14 May)

Alternatively if you'd like it on Saturday (15 May) pick up from church between 10am and midday

Please let Jean know the day and number of teas you want by emailing or telephone

Jeanjames9363@gmail.com

0161 432 5455

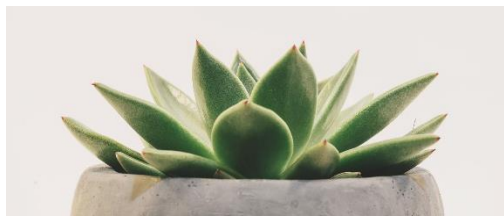
Do you want to challenge yourself this Christian Aid Week? Why not take on CA 300,000 steps to get fit and raise funds. Find out more and sign up at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week/challenge-yourself>

One or two people are doing a House to House collection. If you wish to donate there will be envelopes available in the church entrance for you to take Week beginning 3 May to be returned 10 or 17 May.

Dialstone Lane Methodist Church Plant stall – in aid of Christian

Aid. The first stall will be on Saturday 8th May 11.00-2.00, last stall, on Saturday 15th May 11.00-2.00. The times of stalls during the week will be confirmed nearer the time. Donations of plants – for garden (flowers, fruits, vegetables and herbs) or house, will be welcomed. As you might expect severe weather conditions may affect opening times. Proceeds will go to Christian Aid, whose campaign focus this year is helping people deal with the injustices of climate chaos, which impacts most severely on the world's poorest countries.

Lesley Fennell, Christian Aid Rep lesley.fennell@hotmail.co.uk





Prayers from Linda

Prayer for strength and peace

O Lord our God.

You are the light that guides our feet.
You are the map that gives us direction.
You are the peace that makes us strong.
You are the leader whom we faithfully follow.

May your light illuminate our life
And your guidance bring us direction.
May we find inspiration in your words
and peace in our hearts as we follow you

Amen.



Prayer for inner peace and calm

Holy Spirit, please encircle us,
Come hold us safe and secure.
Wrap our minds up with your truth
Guide our thoughts and calm our fears.
Steady our emotions,
Lord would you would guide our feelings,
May I not be overcome and upset.
Sustain our souls,
With visions for the future,
And hope for tomorrow.

We need you Lord our 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.



No names required because
God Knows.

The Faction Factors and the Friendship Matters

(John 10:16) – Jesus said, “And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So, there shall be one flock, one shepherd.”

The *Sitz im Leiben*

Factions – Denominations, different sects, different confessions, different faiths, different affirmations etc.

Frictions – Conflicts in the name of caste, frictions in the name of region, in the name of class, in the name of gender, sexuality, in the name of religions, in the name of property, in the name of politics & elections etc.

Fractions – Doctrinal divisions, ritualistic divisions, Eucharistic divisions, ecumenical vs evangelical divisions, gospel vs culture, faith vs science, etc.

Fictions – Hermeneutics of convenience, arm-chaired Christianity, exclusivism (no salvation in other places, no truth in other faiths)

The *Message*

1. **The Frontiers of the Mission** - “I have other sheep that are not of this fold”. The boundaries of the church are beyond our own four walls of denomination, confession and faith. ‘Enlarging of the tents.’ This reveals the Good Shepherd’s reach, for he reaches the unreachable, he reaches the ones with no reach. He has similar sheep who are in other folds. It is not similarity that binds them, but the diversity among sheep, which still he says he has other sheep in other folds.
2. **The Friends in Mission** – “Other sheep in other folds”. In colour the sheep would differ, in size they would differ, in their nurture they would differ, in their diet they would differ, yet the Good Shepherd says that they are all his own. Thereby creates that unity among its entire sheep affirming their pluralities. For after all the sheep are either friends or would have been kith and kin but are divided due to circumstances. They are all equal partners and enjoy the fellowship of this shepherd who has different folds.
3. **The Fetching in Mission** – ‘I must bring them also’. The Good Shepherd, not only affirms his own sheep in other folds, he also tries to bring them together. He creates a space for mutual respect for each other, mutual learning, mutual caring and sharing. He provides and facilitates a space for network among his own sheep in different folds. Bringing them together would give them a chance of enhancing their friendship, strengthening their fellowship and creating unity affirming plurality and not trying for uniformity by attempting to clone similar species.
4. **The Faith in Mission** – ‘the different sheep from different folds will heed his voice’. Faith comes from hearing, and when they are brought together their common pilgrimage of faith is drawn with much clarity. By listening to his voice their

spiritualities are deepened. Probably the other sheep in other folds did not resist to his voice saying that it was foreign, it was not indigenous, it was not spiritual or it was not lively, but rather all these different sheep from different folds listened to the voice in search of truth.

- 5. The Finale in Mission** – ‘so there shall be one flock and one shepherd’ the goal of mission of God is to bring all the different sheep from different folds to make to one flock, where diversity is affirmed and plurality is respected. There will be one chief shepherd, for God is always one, though we have different shepherds in our nurture and trainings. That is the finale in mission and that’s where we are all as faiths, churches, religions, ideologies, regions are journeying towards. One flock and One Shepherd, is the great finale to where all of us are marching.

Some years ago, in the campaign for the Presidency in the US, I have seen a poster, which has Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s photograph on one box, under which it was written the “Dreamer” for his dream was to see when his children would be judged not by the colour of their skin but by their content of character. There was a second box, which had President Barack Obama’s photograph under which it was written “Dream”. Both the photographs were adjacent to each other calling on the attention of the people to see the reality of the dream, dreamt by Rev. King come true in the life of President Obama. As I saw this poster, and particularly in light of this Sunday reading, if at all we have a poster where on one box is Jesus Christ, who prophesied that there would be one flock and one shepherd, and under his name it is written “Dreamer”. The box adjacent is an empty one, for under this box it is written, “Dream”. Therefore, the calling to all of us, to our churches and to different faiths is to fill that box with our photograph if we are trying to make that dream of Christ a real one by becoming united as one flock under the shepherd-ship of one Shepherd.

Raj Bharat Patta,
23rd April 2021

Sunday 25th April 2021

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.

Opening Prayer

Lord God, wherever we may be we approach you now as your people, and the sheep of your pasture. We enter your gates with thanksgiving, and your courts with praise, for your steadfast love endures forever. AMEN

Hymn: The Lord's my shepherd StF481
Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://youtu.be/pN4tPkX0MG0>

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me lie in pastures green,
he leads me by the still, still waters,
his goodness restores my soul.
And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.

He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil;
and my cup -- it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path --
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.

Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

Let us pray together

Almighty and eternal God, glorious in power and purity, we adore you.

Creator and Lord of the universe, we are amazed that you care for us, and when we were far off, you sought us in Christ, to bring us back to the fold of your love.

Forgive us that we still sometimes turn away from you like lost sheep.

Draw us back to you, we pray, assure us of your love, and enable us to share your love with others; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
AMEN

Today's Gospel Reading: John 10: 11 - 18

Time to Reflect

Sheep and shepherds are frequently mentioned in the Bible. Several prominent Old Testament figures spent time as shepherds, including Jacob, Moses, and, of course, King David.

The prophet Ezekiel speaks of shepherds who do not care for the sheep but are only interested in profiting from them (Chapter 34). The "shepherds" to whom he is referring are the kings of Israel who have badly failed their subjects. God, he says, will set up in their place his servant David, who will feed his people and be their shepherd.

Jesus referred to himself as "the good shepherd", who lays down his life for the sheep. This is in contrast with the hired hand who only wants his wages. Jesus is therefore declaring himself to be the fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy. He is the King, "born of David's line", who has come to establish God's own sovereignty over his people.

Shepherds in the UK today drive their sheep, often aided by a dog or two. This is very different from the shepherds of Biblical times who led their sheep. The sheep knew their voices and would follow. Even in this country, however, lambs which are orphaned, or

whose mothers do not have enough milk for them, are often raised by hand. They soon learn to recognise the person who feeds them, and like Mary's little lamb in the nursery rhyme, will follow them everywhere.

May we hear and recognise the voice of our own Good Shepherd, and follow him where he leads us, because we can always trust in his love and care.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you that in Jesus you have given us a Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. We pray for those who give of themselves and take risks to serve others who are suffering or in danger. Grant them courage and endurance, and time for rest and refreshment.

We thank you for the compassion of the Good Shepherd, leading his sheep to still waters and safe pasture. We pray for those who work among the poor peoples of the world and care for the victims of abuse and neglect. Grant them determination, patience and empathy, and strength to go on in the face of disappointment.

We thank you for the love of the Good Shepherd, who knows his sheep by name. We pray for those engaged in the pastoral care of the church. Grant them wisdom, understanding, listening ears and caring hearts.

We remember people we know who are facing times of difficulty or anxiety, sickness or sorrow. We pray that they may know the presence of the Good Shepherd and find in him comfort, strength, peace, healing and hope.

We pray for ourselves, that we may hear the call of the Good Shepherd in our own lives, and follow, joyfully and trustingly, in his way of love.

We ask it in his name and for his sake. AMEN

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

**Hymn: In heavenly love abiding StF736
or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind**
<https://youtu.be/sT0r9DaGbmQ>

In heavenly love abiding,
no change my heart shall fear;
and safe is such confiding,
for nothing changes here:
the storm may roar without me,
my heart may low be laid;
but God is round about me,
and can I be dismayed?

Wherever he may guide me,
no want shall turn me back;
my Shepherd is beside me,
and nothing can I lack:
his wisdom ever waketh,
his sight is never dim;
he knows the way he taketh,
and I will walk with him.

Green pastures are before me,
which yet I have not seen;
bright skies will soon be o'er me,
where darkest clouds have been;
my hope I cannot measure,
my path to life is free;
my Saviour has my treasure,
and he will walk with me.

*Anna Laetitia Waring (1823-1910)
Based on psalm 23*

A prayer of blessing

Now the God of peace, that brought again
from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that
great shepherd of the sheep, through the
blood of the everlasting covenant, make you
perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is well-pleasing in
his sight, to whom be the glory for ever and
ever. AMEN

(Hebrews 13: 20 – 21, Authorized Version)

Original materials by John Barnett

All

Hymns reproduced under CCLI 1144191.

Local Churches please insert CCLI No here

Bible Reading: John 10: 11 – 18 (NRSV)

[Jesus said] “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away – and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”