

*Dear Heaton Moor United Church,*

*Greetings to you all in the name of our liberator Jesus Christ.*

*As you will know, from Monday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of July, the government has announced that all the restrictions of lockdown will be relaxed, however we are called to keep a caution and kindly be responsible in meeting people and in mixing with people in large gatherings. In light of these relaxations, the leadership team of our church has met this week to discuss about the gatherings and opening up of the church, and it was agreed that we will continue to wear a mask in the building, and will sing in the church with our masks on. Sharon will share more details about it and you can read it in the newsletter.*

*This week we had our two short spells of our pilgrimage and it was good to meet some of you at your homes and gardens and to chat with you. Good to know that many of you enjoy reading the weekly newsletters, and thank you for your encouragement.*

*We also had our worship group meeting this week to discuss about our collective story sharing as a church. We now have a booklet to share about the process and the kinds of engagement to have, with four main themes as thanksgiving, lament, learning and praying. May I kindly request you all to kindly participate in it. You will receive the booklets soon.*

*This week I was on a Connexional interview panel interviewing people for the post of Asia Pacific Coordinator of the Methodist Church, and it was quite interesting to hear various people's perspectives on the issues of mission and Asia Pacific concerns.*

*The URC General Assembly which concluded this week passed several resolutions, among which it has passed ten significant resolutions pertaining to the situation in Israel and Palestine. You can read about it on this link: <https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3868-urc-passes-multiple-resolutions-about-israel-and-palestine.html>*

*We join in thanksgiving for the ordination of Jonnie Hill on Saturday, the 17<sup>th</sup> July, and send Jonnie our prayers and best wishes for his future ministerial engagements.*

*Herewith I am sending you the reflection and the worship order for your kind meditation.*

*Many thanks to all those who supported our 'Boycott the Bed' initiative in support of 'Action for Children'. It was quite a different experience sleeping in the church.*

*On Thursday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, the Evangelism and Growth team of the Methodist Church is organising a series of Facebook Live exploring different perspectives on some hot button theological topics called 'Sticky Theology' at 12.15pm, and I will be on a panel discussing the topic 'Why is Jesus relevant today?' If you are interested do join in this discussion. For more details you can visit [https://www.facebook.com/events/2954476104822418/?event\\_time\\_id=2954600814809947](https://www.facebook.com/events/2954476104822418/?event_time_id=2954600814809947)*

*May you all have a blessed week and stay safe and stay responsible.*

*Thanking you,*

*With love and prayers,*

*Raj*

*15<sup>th</sup> July 2021*

# MESSAGE FROM THE CO-EDITOR

When I left the office last week I got together with the other volunteers from Space At The Table project and enjoyed a picnic lunch provided by the team behind the meals. Not only was it delicious but it was a great end to the project. After a busy weekend with Action for Children I began my working week with quite a few meetings but each one was so different. I started at the Stockport Interfaith Group meeting discussing unity and diversity - most apt considering the actions of the minority after the football on Sunday.

Tuesday began with a prayer conversation about praying at home and using ordinary objects as part of our prayers and spiritual routines. The team did a short pilgrimage before I took part in online discussions around the theme of home is everything. Finally, the day ended with the leadership meeting where we discussed opening up the church further in light of the latest government advice and Sharon says more about this further in the notices.

Wednesday was a day off - a girly day with my daughter but I was glad to be back to work on Thursday for a rest!



Thursday we had another short team pilgrimage and it was lovely to take advantage of this lovely weather in some of our church members beautiful gardens.

As always if I can be of any help please do not hesitate to contact me,

*JoAnne*

[community@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk](mailto:community@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk)  
07340 269 354

[www.heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk](http://www.heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk)

 Heaton Moor United Church



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**Office Opening** The office opening times for next week will be:

**Monday 10 - 2**

**Tuesday 10 - 2**

**Wednesday 10 - 2**

**Thursday Closed**

**Friday 9-11**



## FUTURE EVENT – Heaton Mersey Artisan Market 24<sup>th</sup> July 11am – 3pm

We will be having a stall at the artisan market being held at St John's Church. The stall will be used to highlight everything that goes on at Heaton Moor United Church. If anybody is available to help on the day to talk to people about who we are and what we do then please contact JoAnne



### My Shopping List

Jars of pasta sauce  
Tinned vegetables (peas, carrots)  
Tinned tomato  
Tinned kidney beans  
Tinned chick peas  
Baked beans  
Custard / Rice pudding  
Tinned fruit  
Jam / peanut butter  
Dried red lentils  
Crisps and child friendly goodies

## School Pantry

We are doing another school pantry – this time at Didsbury Road School.

To the left is a list of items that we are collecting. If you can help in any way that would be great.

As this collection is to cover the summer holidays we would also appreciate any child friendly goodies you would like to donate e.g. crisps, breakfast bars, juice cartons, biscuits etc.

If you would like further information, please contact JoAnne on [community@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk](mailto:community@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk) or 07340 269 354



We did it! On Friday night Raj and his family and me and my little man spent the night at Church – **Boycotting Our Beds** to raise much needed funds for Action for Children. Those who heard me speak at Church on Sunday will know that it was not that much of a hardship to spend the night – we started with a lovely curry made by Shiny, played ping-pong and football before bedding down for the night. On Saturday morning we served grab and go continental breakfasts before packing up.

Thank you to all who supported us with well wishes, prayers and sponsorship. Our JustGiving page raised a staggering £630.





You are invited to .....

Jonnie Hill's Ordination and Induction

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July at Wilmslow URC @ 1.45pm

Lunch on the lawn @ 12.30

Bring your own lunch and share in fellowship before watching the live stream of Jonnie's Ordination in Church at 1.45pm

If you aren't able to join us at Church you can watch the live stream using the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChTQoFOFcZYbPyHLHRlOkEW>



Jonnie's first communion service at Gatley United Reformed Church will be on their YouTube channel on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July at 2pm.

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=gatley+united+reformed+church](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=gatley+united+reformed+church)



**United Stockport Circuit**



### **The Circuit Worship Band are looking for musicians!**

You need to be available to play for the monthly Circuit Service on a reasonably regular basis — this will be at 4pm on the first Sunday of each month starting from this September.

### **We are looking for:**

- a singer, confident to offer a lead vocal
- backing singers
- a rhythm guitarist,
- A bass guitarist
- Percussionist (drums or other).

If you would like to audition, please contact David Clarke on [davidsclarke@hotmail.com](mailto:davidsclarke@hotmail.com) or Cathy Bird on [cathy.bird@methodist.org.uk](mailto:cathy.bird@methodist.org.uk)

**Easing of restrictions and returning to the building.**

**The Leadership Team have met and discussed the governments easing of restrictions.**

**Here are the highlights:**

**We are advising that masks will be still worn in the whilst in the building and moving around it.**

**Singing can take place in services, whilst wear a mask please.**

**No booking in for services from August.**

**Still socially distance seating.**

**Wednesday Morning coffee morning to take place in the Church in August.**

**Coffee after the service will take place from September ( there will be guidelines on how to make this as safe as possible )**

**I will update you more, as things are more sorted.**

**Sharon**



Prayer Vigil update .....

This week £1280 was sent over to India to support the Christian Service Agency.

£640 was raised through the JustGiving page and the Circuit matched it .

Thank you, everyone for your generous giving and prayers

**NCCCI**

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## *Prayers from The Office*

Lord, we give you our worries and concerns and we ask for your guidance.

You see it all, the outer circumstances and the inner turmoil.

We know you understand our lives – that sometimes our hearts weigh heavy with trouble.

Right now we lay all of these things before you.

We breathe in, safe in the knowledge that we are held by your grace.

We breathe out, knowing that we are held secure in your arms.

And we wait on you.

For you are all truth, you are overflowing love, you are a beacon of hope and a fortress of faith.

Lord may we choose to be attentive to your voice.

May we be alert to your spirits guiding as we journey onwards with you.

Amen

A prayer as I put on my mask:

Creator,  
as I prepare to go into the world,  
help me to see the sacrament  
in the wearing of this cloth -  
let it be "an outward sign  
of an inward grace" -  
a tangible and visible way of living  
love for my neighbours,  
as I love myself.

Christ,  
since my lips will be covered,  
uncover my heart,  
that people would see my smile  
in the crinkles around my eyes.  
Since my voice may be muffled,  
help me to speak clearly,  
not only with my words,  
but with my actions.

Holy Spirit,  
As the elastic touches my ears,  
remind me to listen carefully -  
and full of care -  
to all those I meet.  
May this simple piece of cloth be  
shield and banner,  
and each breath that it holds,  
be filled with your love.

In your Name and  
in that love,  
I pray.

May it be so.  
May it be so

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.



## **God doesn't dwell among the sites of dehumanisation**

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Reflecting on Ephesians 2:11-22

Following the finals of the Euro 2020 football championship, Sancho, Rashford and Saka, the three football players from the England team have been racially abused and so much venom has been spitting on them online because of their colour by some toxic nationalists. When a mural of Rashford was damaged at Withington in Manchester, a great number of people came together to stand up against racism, supporting Rashford, offering messages of love and calling communities to defeat hatred and hostility against the stranger has been heart-warming.

I was particularly warmed by the profound theological statement made by Phoebe Parkin, the Youth President of the Methodist Church condemning racism following Euro 2020 final. She says, "Football isn't the problem. The problem is that we live in a society where sexism, racism, nationalism and violence are enabled, where not enough of us (including myself) actively work to challenge even the lowest levels of sexism, racism and nationalism. Jesus showed us that we should be peacemakers and showed us that we should love others as ourselves, showing the same grace and compassion that God shows to us." By this statement Phoebe is inviting the church to actively work in challenging issues of racism, sexism and nationalism in the spirit of Jesus offering love, peace and compassion.

In the epistle lesson for this week, Ephesians 2:11-22, Paul speaks to the early church at Ephesus about Jesus who has come to make peace by breaking down the dividing wall, transcending all kinds of barriers like uncircumcised, gentiles, strangers, foreigners, aliens and making all people of God as 'one humanity' and as equal members of the household of God. In the Ephesian context, the divisions among people were based on circumcision and uncircumcision, believers and non-believers, gentiles and Jews, foreigners and natives. In other words, the divisions were based on rituals, religion, ethnicity, and regionalism. Into such a divided and divisive context Paul was ascribing the public relevance of the gospel of Jesus Christ by encouraging them to strive for peace, reconciliation, and oneness of humanity, reminding them of Jesus' mission of peace and peace-making, joining both the groups in peace. It is interesting to see Pauls' public theological perspectives coming alive in this text as he engages with his context.

Firstly, Paul explains that peace is realised by creating one new humanity in Christ. Paul says, "He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of two, thus making peace," for peace in a divisive setting is possible only by creating 'one new humanity' in Christ. Paul was not offering a solution of creating a 'one new church' here, rather was emphasising 'one new humanity in Christ.' Humanity has been losing its credibility by falling prey to the divisions based on race, colour, ethnicity, religion and ritual. In other words, with the entrenchment of divisions, discriminations, oppressions, and marginalisation in the society, dehumanising has taken over humanity since creation. So when Christ has come in the form of a human, it is important to recognise that Christ was born as Jesus in a dehumanising world offering 'salvation as humanisation.' Though this sounds anthropomorphic, the idea is when Jesus has come to offer peace, breaking the walls of division, he is breaking the walls of dehumanisation and had been creating one new humanity which strives for a renewed creation order. To put it in other words, Christ has come to create one new humanity by breaking the powers of dehumanisation, so that this new humanity in Christ will work together transcending all barriers for a new and renewed creation.

So, drawing a relevance of this text for our context, today we recognise racism, sexism and toxic nationalism have been the principalities of dehumanisation, that have been dividing the society, and the call for us as followers of Jesus Christ is to work towards 'one new humanity' where all these evils of dehumanisations will be dismantled. The call of the church is to partake with Jesus in creating 'one new humanity', where Christ offers the clue to understand what humanness means, for love, peace, reconciliation, compassion and justice are the outward expressions of the 'one new humanity.' What have we as a church contributed towards creating that 'one new humanity' in Christ? The obsessions of the church today have been on numerical church growth, and the mission for 'one new humanity' is taken a back bench in our endeavours as a church. We as a church should be at the forefront of fighting racism, sexism, toxic nationalism, and addressing the needs of the people on the margins. By such activism and actions new spaces and new places of Christian presence will be celebrated. We as a church should stand by Rashford, Sancho and Saka and many like them who have become victims of racism and engage with the issues in the public sphere, for only then we as churches will find our relevance today.

Secondly, Paul explains that peace is celebrated as 'one new humanity' in Christ by growing into a new temple of God in Christ (20-22v). Here Paul offers a clue for the church to grow. When peace through Christ and in Christ is made, then all disparities and inequalities are broken down for this 'one new humanity' becomes the household of God built on Jesus Christ, the corner stone. Paul proposes to the church at Ephesus that this 'one new humanity' where peace, equality and love are established, now becomes the 'dwelling-place for God.' In a way Paul was proposing a new definition for the temple of God, that God is not limited to the holy shrines and the temples, nor is confined by territory or building, rather the 'one new humanity' becomes the site where God's indwelling moves, lives and happens.

The relevance of this text for us today is that when dehumanising powers of racism, sexism and toxic nationalism are broken down and dismantled, 'one new humanity in Christ' is created. In that new creation, peace, equality and love thrives, and such a new site becomes the new ground where God finds God's new dwelling place. So as followers if we defeat these powers and break down the walls of division, then we collectively become part of the 'one new humanity' and we become the new temple where God dwells among us. Put it differently, if dehumanising powers thrive and dominate our lives, God is not living among us and we as humans have lost the purpose of our humanness. So, the call for us as church is to find the dwelling place of God. It's time that we as churches should be working for a new humanity and witness that God dwells among us in that new humanity and community.

God doesn't dwell among the sites of dehumanisations, for all the powers of dehumanisations are anti-God. Let us then work together in breaking down the walls of racism, sexism and toxic nationalism and make our churches places of love, hospitality and inclusion. Amen.

Raj Bharat Patta,  
16<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**Sunday 18 July 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**

God of power, majesty, and wonder, we worship and adore you with our hearts, our souls and our minds. As we begin this time of worship, open our hearts to you, challenge us and transform us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Hymn: StF 248 I heard the voice of Jesus say**

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mXMQqiLW9c>

I heard the voice of Jesus say:  
'Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, O weary one, lay down  
your head upon my breast.'  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
weary and worn and sad,  
I found in him a resting-place,  
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say:  
'Behold, I freely give  
the living water; thirsty one,  
stoop down and drink and live.'  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say:  
'I am this dark world's Light;  
look unto me, your morn shall rise,  
and all your day be bright.'  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk,  
till travelling days are done.

*Horatius N. Bonar (1808-1889)*

Let us pray together

Adoration:

- Spend some time thinking about who God is to you and what it means to have a relationship with him. Spend some time praising God for his amazing love and his awesome faithfulness.
- Spend some time thinking about what God has done and is doing and all the promises he has kept. Thank him and praise him for all his wonderful and glorious works.

Confession:

If we confess to God those things we have said, thought or done that have hurt others and in turn hurt him and do so in sincerity and truth, he forgives our sins.  
Spend some time saying sorry, genuinely, to God.

*Silence is maintained for as long as is appropriate.*

The words of grace are ours to receive and believe: our sins are forgiven. Amen. Thanks be to God.

Thanksgiving:

- Think about your relationship with God. We all go through times where we feel that God is distant, but God is always there and is always faithful. Spend some time thanking him for his faithfulness and his love.

- Think about your life at the moment. What are you thankful for? Even if it is hard at the moment, try and think of one thing to thank God for – whether it is the beauty of the weather that we have enjoyed lately (if hot weather is something you enjoy!) or the beauty of the sunrise or sunset, or that one person in your life who has always been faithful.
- Spend some time thanking God for everything and anything.

### Today's Gospel Reading:

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

<sup>30</sup>The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. <sup>32</sup>And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. <sup>33</sup>Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

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### Time to Reflect

There is a sense of accountability with the disciples to Jesus and to each other. Perhaps, accountability isn't the best word, though? Maybe 'fellowship' might be a better word. In what ways have we encouraged each other during the pandemic and in what ways are we going to encourage others as we move out of it?

1. Jesus told the disciples to rest. Rest, as we know, is important and taking a break away from all things church and all things 'life' is as important too. How can we improve our resting? Sometimes, some of us, feel guilty if we have a long rest!
2. What does it mean to you that Jesus is a shepherd? What other biblical references can you think of that use the image of God or Jesus as a shepherd?

Take a time to sit quietly

### A time of prayer

We come to the part of our worship now as we pray for others and ourselves. As we do so, I invite you to think about each specific focus in turn and end with "The Lord hears our prayer". "Thanks be to God".

We pray for God's world.

As we pray for God's world, we are mindful that we have not been wise, loving stewards of it. We have been greedy and selfish, rather than focusing on the beauty and wonder, and encouraging flourishing.

We pray for world rulers, that they would rule with truth and justice, mercy and grace and that they would remember that all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Jesus Christ.

Take a moment in silent prayer to pray for God's world and world rulers.

*"The Lord hears our prayer". "Thanks be to God".*

We pray for God's church.

We pray for the church worldwide, that we would unite in the common goal to worship and serve God together in a spirit of unity and holiness.

We pray for the church where we are and in a moment of quiet, we offer up to God our prayers for our church.

*"The Lord hears our prayer". "Thanks be to God".*

We take time now to pray for those who are known to us. We pray for those who are known to us that are going through times of trial that they would know God's peace and comfort. We pray for those going through times of joy, that they would know Your love and not take this time for granted.

We pray also for ourselves, and I invite you to spend some time in prayer to God for yourself.  
*"The Lord hears our prayer". "Thanks be to God".*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father .....*

**Hymn:** Listen to The Lord is my Shepherd by Stuart Townend. (StF 481)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN4tPkX0MG>

o or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

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)*

### **A prayer of blessing**

God of faithfulness, always journeying with us, as we journey through this week and all that lies ahead, help us to remember you are always with us.

Grant us faithfulness to you and to Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

Grant us strength to witness and proclaim your kingdom of love and grace.

And the blessing of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be among you and those whom you cherish in your heart, now and always.  
Amen.

Original Materials by Matthew Ramsden

Local Preacher in Bolton Methodist Circuit (6/1)

All

Hymns reproduced under CCLI 1144191.

Local Churches please insert CCCLi No here

We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team. We aim to continue to provide these resources until the end of August 2021.