

PRENTON NEWS

The Magazine of
Prenton United Reformed Church
Prenton Road West, Birkenhead



NOVEMBER 2020

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SOMEBODY LOVES YOU

Somebody loves you more than you know,
Somebody goes with you wherever you go.

Somebody really and truly cares,
And lovingly listens to all of your prayers.

Don't doubt for a minute that this is true,
For God loves his children and takes care of them too.

And all of His treasures are yours to share
If you love Him completely and show that you care.

And if you walk in His footsteps and have faith to believe,
There's nothing you ask for that you will not receive.

Dear Consoler of all! How consoling and reassuring to realise that
at all times You love me and that You care about me.

Helen Steiner Rice

*Items for the December 2020 & January 2021 church magazine by
Sunday 22nd November 2020 please.*

FROM OUR MINISTER

REMEMBER, REMEMBER – WHAT WAS IT AGAIN?

I don't know about you, but as we move through a period of thanksgiving and remembrance into a period of preparation for Christmas it seems like all of those things this year are muted as celebrations and commemorations are cancelled due to the Covid-19 restrictions. However, just because we can't hold a Harvest Festival in church doesn't mean we can't be thankful to God for his provision; just because we can't hold a Remembrance Service at a War Memorial doesn't mean we can't remember the 'greater love' of those who have given all for others, and those we love who are no longer with us, and just because Christmas as we know it, might be cancelled it doesn't mean we can't prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ.

I want to thank the fellowships of Prenton and Wallasey Village for the way you have thanked, remembered and prepared, all shown through your generosity. As I write this letter Heather has received hundreds of pounds towards the shoeboxes; just a small example of our response to God's goodness, remembering those in greater need and giving an opportunity for Christ to be a reality in the lives of others.

Acts 20:35 tells us, **"You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"** I've seen this played out through both fellowships, particularly during this pandemic. It's been demonstrated through the time given to one another, the flowers, chocolates and biscuits dropped on doorsteps, through phone calls, listening ears and words of encouragement, through shopping trips made and by upholding one another in prayer. These all demonstrate that you not only remember those words of Jesus but you act upon them.

We still have some difficult times ahead and it appears that we will have to live with the restrictions placed upon us because of Covid-19 for some time to come.

Although our church buildings remain closed we still face financial obligations and pressures and I'd ask you to continue your regular church giving. However there are additional pressures faced by both fellowships which will put further pressure on our finances. The cost of the planned work on the toilets and kitchen at Wallasey Village is almost double what was budgeted. And, following a fire risk assessment, Prenton has to make alterations to two exits in order to be able to legally re-open the church building, whenever that might be.

October and November have become 'Gift Months' within the life of our churches and I am using this opportunity to ask you to review your giving in the light of ongoing and increased expenditure. This will enable us to continue supporting God's mission in our communities

particularly as we emerge from lockdown (Perhaps you might consider a legacy in your will).

So, I urge and encourage you to **"...remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'"**, and to continue being thankful for the good you experience remembering God's love for us and demonstrating his coming amongst us.

God bless.

Jeff

THANK YOU

Thank you for those who took on preparing services while Jeff and I had a little time off. We had a lovely few days away in Penrith; not the sunshine holiday that we had planned to celebrate 40 years of marriage but none the less, an opportunity to relax and be thankful for God's grace over those years and to laugh at the photos!

We know that preparing these services for delivery online was daunting and seemed to be a steep learning process, but the evidence shows that you have succeeded! We have been able to worship God together, we shared praise, prayer, teaching and learning, we've seen some old faces that we've missed and perhaps some new faces!

Thank you too for all of your very generous donations for Operation Christmas Child, and I will let you know in the next magazine how many boxes we sent this year.

We have a great deal to be thankful for, we give thanks to God especially for you.

Much love **Heather and Jeff** xx

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS AND THE NEXT CHURCH MAGAZINE

It has been decided that the next issue of the Church magazine will be for December 2020 and January 2021 – good gracious where has this year gone!!

There will NOT be any Scout Post this year and the chances of us being back in the Church building before 2021 seem very slim, so if you would like to send Christmas Greetings to your church friends through the magazine, and save on postage, please let me have your names by November 22nd as I am hoping to get the magazine out for Advent Sunday. My telephone number is 0151 608 2510.

Margaret (Editor)



LOCKDOWN LOG

When the Covid lockdown first started in March, we expected it to last for 12 weeks for most people, then for those who were instructed to 'shield' this was extended for another couple of months. I was, like many others, cautious about moving back into society and I remained very limited in my contact with others. I was still far from comfortable going out and being with other people when our region was restricted again.

I, like many of you, I expect, have found the loss of community, of freedom and of choice hard to deal with. There is a rhythm to our lives and sometimes when it's broken it's because:

- a) we want it to be,- we go on holiday, we move to a new house, we have a special event to plan for and celebrate; or
- b) we don't want it to be, - we or our loved ones are ill, we suffer loss of a loved one, a job, or something precious to us.

The list of things that can have an impact on our lives is long, usually each of us is affected individually but this year the impact has been worldwide! No geographic, race, economic, religious, political, age or social boundaries have guaranteed exemption from the threat of Covid-19.

Each of us has had to adjust and (hopefully) adhere to new legislation and limitations on our choices. I have, for the most part, been able to keep on an even keel; my faith, the love and support of family and friends have given me the security I need and the hope and will to 'keep on keeping on'.

There have been times when I have found life in lockdown very difficult, and I'm sure that many of you have felt the same. I want to thank you for your love, prayers, support and encouragement and I wanted to share with you that none of us, no matter how 'together' we seem, can do this on our own. Allow yourself to admit that you are allowed to be low or down on occasion, and then remembering all that you have to be thankful for – get up and face another day with hope.

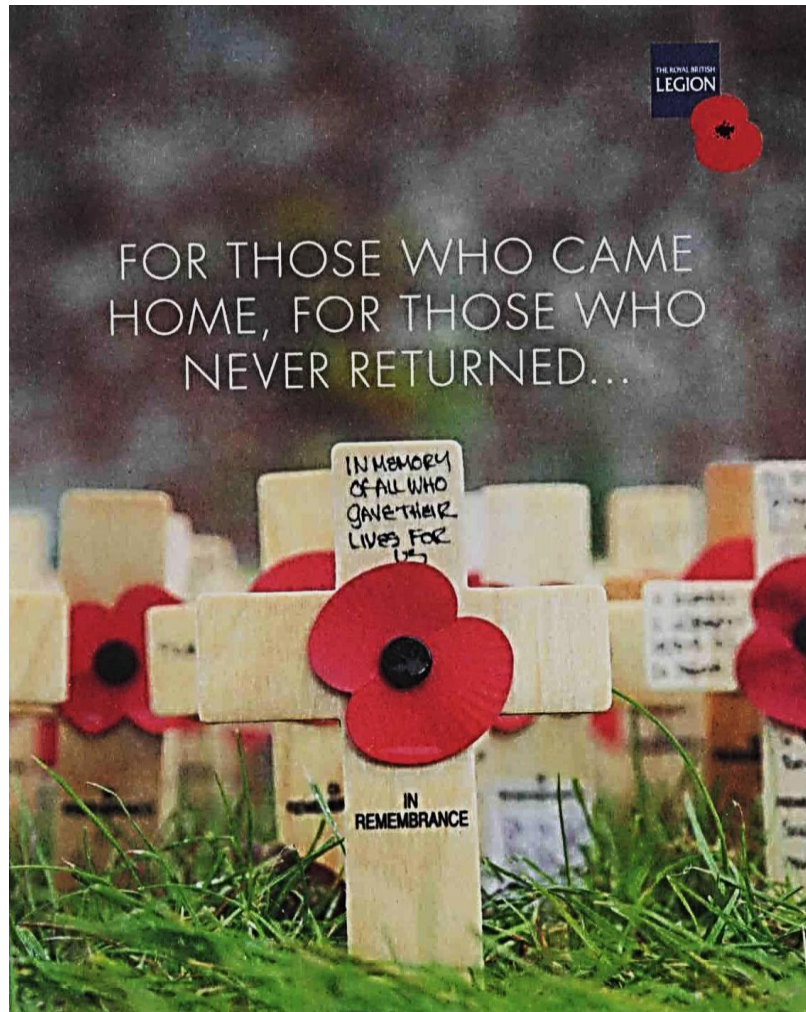
Two old hymns come to mind as I type this, you may remember them, "My Faith it is an Oaken Staff" and "Count Your Blessings". We have a strength beyond our own and everything we need for life if we have Jesus.

So, with these songs in our hearts let's live our lives with the hope and confidence that Jesus gives.

Much love, **Heather** x

It is alleged that in the 1800s the people of Wallasey made a living from wrecking. One Sunday night, rockets were heard. The Vicar interrupted his sermon and shouted, 'Warden, lock the door. I must have time to get my robes off. We must all start equal.'

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 8th
ARMISTICE DAY – NOVEMBER 11th



EVERY CROSS HONOURS THOSE WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER.

The tradition of planting a Field of Remembrance started in 1928, when The Poppy Factory took a group of disabled veterans, a tray of poppies and a collecting tin to the grounds of St Margaret's Church, Westminster.

The men gathered around an original wooden cross that had been planted there, taken from the battlefield grave of an unknown British soldier. Some of the men began to push poppies into the ground, curious passers-by stopped to ask questions and before long they began buying and planting poppies of their own – creating the very first Field of Remembrance.

The Field continued in this way until 1931, when one of The Poppy Factory team came up with the idea of selling small wooden crosses with a poppy at the centre of each – the little Remembrance cross that is still planted to this day.

By 1934, demand for the small wooden crosses was so great that the turf at Westminster had to be divided up into plots for individuals, regiments and associations. Even during the challenging times of World

War II, the Royal British Legion upheld this tradition and new Fields of Remembrance were established at Westminster Abbey. Every year the volunteers plant more than 120,000 personal Tributes made by members of the public, in six Fields of Remembrance across the UK. It is a moving and inspiring sight that brings home to all of us that Remembrance is a deeply important and personal act. It honours those who fought for our freedom which is as important today as it has ever been.

The Royal British Legion are determined that the Covid-19 pandemic will not get in the way of our act of Remembrance and if social distancing makes planting tributes in the Fields impossible, they will have a virtual Field of Remembrance at www.rbl.org.uk/virtualfield.

God, our refuge and strength, bring near the day when wars shall cease, poverty and pain shall end, and the earth know the peace of heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN, AND IN
THE MORNING, WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

'LEST WE FORGET'

If you did an online search for 'Remembrance Sunday' this year the first few search results will say something like, 'Remembrance Sunday 2020 cancelled'. That's particularly true for us on the Wirral as we face tier 3 lockdown and for our churches as our buildings remain closed, but that shouldn't mean that our 'remembering' is cancelled.



Throughout the Bible God calls on his people time and time again to 'remember', and as we remember we listen; not to the voices that glorify war but rather the voices of those who have suffered because of war.

We listen to the voices of those who willingly or reluctantly fought against an enemy, we listen to the voices of those who did and saw unspeakable things, we listen to the voices of those who refused to fight, we listen to the voices of those who lost loved ones, we listen to the voices of those physically and mentally damaged by what they've seen and done, we listen to the voices of communities torn apart, we listen to the voices of those whose cries for justice go unanswered, we listen to the voices of those who seek power and wealth and position at the expense of others, and we listen to the voice of God as He calls us to love our enemies, to pray for those who persecute us and to 'act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8b).

As we remember those who have suffered as a result of war in the past we remember those who still suffer today and who long for peace. We need to join with those voices crying out 'never again'.

"May memories of those who have gone before you bring you gratitude for their lives, and may God use their example to give you determination to live well and to stand for what is right." (Malcolm Duncan)

PRAYER FOR PEACE

God, make your ways known upon earth,

Your saving power among all peoples.

Renew your Church in holiness and help us to serve you with joy.

Guide the leaders of all nations that justice may prevail throughout the world.

Let not the needy be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Make us instruments of your peace and let your glory be over all the earth.

Amen.

WAR POETS

When I was at school I remember reading the 'war poets' in English Literature. They captured my imagination, but it was the poems of poets such as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon rather than those of Alfred Lord Tennyson which drew me in. Tennyson's were unrealistic to me and seemed to ignore the horror faced by so many whilst those of Owen offered a raw reality of what war was like and Sassoon's, often sarcastic jibes, drew me in.

Here are a couple of those poems which gripped my imagination as a teenager; ones we can pray into as so many people face war today and still suffer its terrible consequences.

Attack

Siegfried Sassoon

At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun

In the wild purple of the glow'ring sun,

Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud

The menacing scarred slope; and, one by one,

Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire.

The barrage roars and lifts. Then, clumsily bowed

With bombs and guns and shovels and battle-gear,

Men jostle and climb to, meet the bristling fire.

Lines of grey, muttering faces, masked with fear,

They leave their trenches, going over the top,

While time ticks blank and busy on their wrists,

And hope, with furtive eyes and grappling fists,

Flounders in mud. O Jesus, make it stop!

Dulce et Decorum Est

Wilfred Owen

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.—
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
In all my dreams before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori.*
(*It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country*)

WORDS OF WIT AND WISDOM

We are all time travellers moving at the speed of exactly 60 minutes every hour.

If you are too open-minded, your brains will fall out.

A balanced diet is a biscuit in each hand.

Junk is something you've kept for years and throw away three weeks before you need it.

Middle age is when broadness of the mind and narrowness of the waist change places.

Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognise a mistake when you make it again.

TEN COMMANDMENTS

Someone has written these beautiful words. We must read and try to understand the deep meaning of it. They are like the Ten Commandments to follow in life all the time.

Prayer is not a 'spare wheel' that you pull out when in trouble, but it is a 'steering wheel' that directs the right path throughout.

So why is a car's windscreen so large and the rear view mirror so small? Because our past is not so important as our future. So look ahead and move on.

Friendship is like a book. It takes a few seconds to burn, but it takes years to write.

All things in life are temporary. If it's going well, enjoy it, it won't last long. If it's going badly, don't worry, that won't last long either.

Old friends are gold! New friends are diamond! If you get a diamond, don't forget the gold! Because to hold a diamond, you always need a base of gold!

Often when we lose hope and think this is the end, God smiles from above and says, 'Relax sweetheart, it's just a bend, not the end'.

When God solves your problems, you have faith in His abilities. When God doesn't solve your problems, He has faith in your abilities.

A blind person asked St. Anthony, 'Can there be anything worse than losing eye sight? He replied, 'Yes, losing your vision!'

When you pray for others, God listens to you and blesses them; sometimes, when you are safe and happy, remember that someone has prayed for you.

Worrying does not take away tomorrow's troubles; it takes away today's peace.

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The Bishop of Chester was once on a platform with a group of other people at a School Speech Day. The lady presenting the prizes rose to perform her part in the event, but as she came forward she tripped over a loose floorboard and fell. The Bishop was just able to catch her before she hit the floor.

'Well, well,' he said, 'this is the first time I have ever had a fallen woman in my arms.' She was just as quick: 'This is a first for me too,' she said, 'for I've never been picked up by a Bishop before.'

