

# PRENTON NEWS

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



# APRIL 2021

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Minister: Rev Jeff Hughes Tel: 201 1883  
E-Mail [prentonurcminister@virginmedia.com](mailto:prentonurcminister@virginmedia.com)

Church Website: [prentonurc.org.uk](http://prentonurc.org.uk)  
Any information, pictures or articles for the website should be sent to Philip Roper at [phil.e.roper@btinternet.com](mailto:phil.e.roper@btinternet.com)

### ***THE EASTER BUNNY GETS RUN OVER***

A man was driving along the road when the Easter bunny hopped right in front of him. He slammed on the brakes and swerved to avoid him but it was too late, he hit the Easter bunny square on.

Jumping out of his car the man could see Easter eggs scattered all over the road And there in front of him was the Easter bunny; dead! The driver felt so awful, he began to cry.

Just then a woman, driving down the same road, saw the accident and the man crying on the side of the road. She stopped and asked the man what was wrong. ‘I feel terrible’, the man said, ‘I’ve just killed the Easter bunny. What are all the children going to do if they don’t get their Easter eggs?’

“Don’t worry” the woman said, “I know exactly what to do.” She went to her car and pulled out a spray can. She walked over to the dead bunny and sprayed the contents of the can. Miraculously the Easter rabbit came back to life, jumped up, picked up the spilled eggs and candy, waved its paw at the man and woman watching and hopped down the road.

The man was astonished and turned to the woman, “What is in that spray can? What did you spray on the Easter bunny?”

The woman turned the can around so that the man could read the label. It said: ‘Hair spray. Restores life to dead hair.’



# FROM OUR MINISTER

## LOCKDOWN MISERY AND EASTER HOPE

This will be our second Easter in lockdown.

Whilst a few might be able to get to church for our 'one off' Easter Day service, most will experience worship as we have for the last year, in our homes.

For many, the experience of the last 12 months has been rather like an extended Good Friday. People have suffered much physically, emotionally and spiritually because of the effects of Covid-19 and the future seems uncertain. But those who put their trust in Jesus are Easter People – we know that life brings its sufferings – and boy has this pandemic done that – and we know that we will all experience death – and boy has this pandemic made that all the more difficult to bear. But we are an Easter People and our hope lies in a Saviour who experienced suffering and death but endured; and therein lies our hope and our future.

As the vaccine roll out expands and gathers effectiveness, there is hope of life returning to 'normal', and plans are underway to prepare for opening church so that we can be together, fellowshiping in person.

Pastor S. M. Lockbridge summed our hope up in this way:

It's Friday; Jesus is praying, Peter's a sleeping, Judas is betraying  
But Sunday's comin'

It's Friday; Pilate's struggling, The council is conspiring, The crowd is vilifying,  
They don't even know That Sunday's comin'

It's Friday; The disciples are running like sheep without a shepherd.  
Mary's crying, Peter is denying But they don't know That Sunday's a comin'

It's Friday; The Romans beat my Jesus, They robe him in scarlet,  
They crown him with thorns, But they don't know That Sunday's comin'

It's Friday; See Jesus walking to Calvary, His blood dripping, His body stumbling,  
And his spirit's burdened But you see, it's only Friday; Sunday's comin'

It's Friday; The world's winning, People are sinning, And evil's grinning.

It's Friday; The soldiers nail my Savior's hands to the cross, They nail my Savior's feet to the cross,  
And then they raise him up next to criminals.

It's Friday; But let me tell you something, Sunday's comin'

It's Friday; The disciples are questioning what has happened to their King, And the Pharisees are celebrating that their scheming has been achieved, But they don't know It's only Friday; Sunday's comin'

It's Friday; He's hanging on the cross feeling forsaken by his Father, Left alone and dying, Can nobody save him? Ooooh It's Friday But Sunday's comin'

It's Friday; The earth trembles, The sky grows dark, My King yields his spirit

It's Friday; Hope is lost, Death has won, Sin has conquered, and Satan's just a laughin'

It's Friday; Jesus is buried, A soldier stands guard, And a rock is rolled into place, But it's Friday; It is only Friday.

Sunday is a comin'!

Alleluia, Happy Easter!

Jeff

### A PRAYER FOR OUR CHURCH

I am very grateful to Edna Rowan, Wallasey Village who sent this poem to me recently suggesting this be our prayer.

'O God, make the door of this house wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship, narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and strife.

Make its threshold smooth enough to shut out all that might be a stumbling block to children, or to straying feet, but rugged and strong enough to turn back the tempter's power.

God make the door of this house the gateway to Thine eternal kingdom.'

*Thomas Ken 1637-1711(on St Stephen's , Wallbrook, London.)*

This is a great prayer to pray over our church as we look to reopening our buildings and returning to fellowship, but it's also a great prayer to pray over our own homes, that they too will be places of rest, hospitality and acceptance.

May God give us light to guide us; courage to support us, and love to unite us now and evermore.

Amen



# **Ceremonies of the Church**

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Rev Jeff Hughes conducted the Service  
at Landican Crematorium

for

**RALPH HATTON**

*May he rest in peace and rise in glory*

We send our love, condolences and sympathy to Iris and her family  
and friends.

## **EASTER THOUGHTS**

Someone said to Joseph of Arimathea, "That was such a beautiful, costly, hand-hewn tomb. Why did you give it to someone else to be interred in?" "Oh, it's ok" said Joseph, "he only needed it for the weekend."

"Because of Easter, our coffins are nothing but canoes bearing us across the Jordan River to fairer worlds on High." (Herman Melville, Moby Dick)

German theologian Jurgen Moltmann expresses in a single sentence the great span from Good Friday to Easter Day: "God weeps with us so that we may someday laugh with Him"

If the Christ who died had stopped at the cross, His work had been incomplete.

If the Christ who was buried had stayed in the tomb, He had only known defeat,

But the way of the cross never stops at the cross and the way of the tomb leads on

To victorious grace in the heavenly place where the risen Lord has gone. (Annie Johnson Flint)

Because of Good Friday you can look back and not be afraid.

Because of Easter you can look ahead and not be afraid.

Because of Ascension Day you can look up and not be afraid.

Because of Pentecost you can look in and not be afraid.

## **NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY**

Good news!! Claire, Phil & Erin Thomas have moved back to the Wirral from Bootle and we hope that they will soon be settled into their new home, when they have finished unpacking all the boxes!!

We hope and pray that everyone who has had the vaccine against the coronavirus have not suffered any side effects and are now feeling more positive about the future.

## **REMEMBERING RALPH HATTON**

**22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1926 –18<sup>th</sup> February, 2021**

Ralph was one of the the oldest members of Prenton URC having moved here when St. Paul's, North Road closed and, along with Iris were faithful members of the church though unable to attend regularly in more latter years.

Ralph Hatton was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1926 in Birkenhead, where he was raised. He attended Woodchurch Primary school and then went to the Birkenhead Institute for his senior years.

Like many of his generation, WWII had a profound impact on Ralph which helped shape the rest of his life. He 'joined up' in 1945 at the age of 18, serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps and was stationed between Bristol and Gloucester. It was here that Ralph met Iris who was training to be a nurse. They married in 1948 in the Bethany Chapel in Iris's home town of Ton Pentre in the Rhonda Valley.

That same year they moved to live in Birkenhead where they lived all of their 72 years of married life together, celebrating their Platinum Wedding Anniversary in 2018.

Ralph took up a career in the shipping industry, mainly working for Clan Line in Liverpool until his retirement in the early 1990s.

Ralph was a great music lover, especially modern jazz and he enjoyed watching cricket and reading, but more than anything Ralph was a great family man.

Ralph loved his family; his son, Paul, granddaughters Heather and Hannah, and great grandchild, Charlie, and would often reminisce about family parties at Christmas and New Year and of Sunday afternoons spent playing cricket with family and friends at Harrison Drive.

Not only was he a great family man, he was a genuine people person and a really kind man. He would go out of his way to help people and to make them feel at home. He was a great listener who always made time for other people.

We thank God for Ralph's life and our thoughts and prayers are with Iris and the family at this time of parting.



## LOCKDOWN LOG

It's 12 months since Lockdown started, we expected initially it would be for 3 months or thereabouts. "That won't be too bad" I thought, "I can get some jobs done round the house and such."

Well, I did lots of clearing and sorting and made piles of things in my dining room, these to go to the charity shops; these to return to 'rightful owners'; these to go to church; these to go to the tip!

It was quite therapeutic, I rather enjoyed not being diary driven, I liked having the opportunity to do things at my pace without interruption ... at first anyway! The tips and charity shops were closed, and we couldn't go and see the 'rightful owners' so the piles of 'stuff' stayed in the dining room. When things started to open up again we didn't get the things away, Jeff was busy, I don't drive, queues were huge at the tip, charity shops would only take limited quantities, and we decided to wait until things eased off further so we did nothing with it and it stayed there gathering dust! I missed my window of opportunity, we were locked down again, with the fully stacked dining room still full to the brim!

So, a year on, I still have most of the stuff. The house is not as tidy as it was at the beginning of lockdown, it seems to take a long time to do anything, and motivation can take some effort to get going! I think my 'get up and go' has 'got up and went'! Maybe I've become 'Lockdown lazy'!

With the hope of spring, the hope of Easter, and the hope of an end to many of the restrictions perhaps now is the right time to get ready to take hold of that hope and use it to motivate myself, physically and spiritually, polish up my home and my life ready for the hope that comes with the sun and the Son!

Perhaps you'll join me with a spring clean of your faith! (and your home if you like!)

Much love, Heather x

*Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours, yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion is to look out to the earth, yours are the feet by which He is to go about doing good and yours are the hands by which He is to bless us now.*



**Alleluia ! Easter morning,  
Hear the bells ring out.  
Feel the joy and new upliftment,  
Banish fear and doubt.  
Alleluia ! Gone the darkness,  
Feel the hope within,  
Onward to a bright tomorrow  
See the way begin.  
Alleluia ! Share the gladness,  
Joy be unconfined,  
Gifts of wonder, love and beauty  
Filling heart and mind.  
Alleluia ! He is risen  
Farewell darkest night,  
Death and sadness gone for ever  
Welcome Love and Light!**



## NEW MODERATOR FOR MERSEY SYNOD



The Revd Geoffrey Felton has been nominated as the next Moderator of the United Reformed Church (URC) Mersey Synod.

Geoff was born and raised in Higher Bebington on the Wirral where he spent his teenage years before moving away to study.

He became a Christian in 1984 at Anfield during Mission England, a gathering led by late American evangelist Dr Billy Graham.

Having passed his Geology degree at the University of Portsmouth, Geoff worked for six years in the North Sea on various offshore installations as a geologist. It was during this time he met his now wife, Sarah.

At St George's URC in Hemel Hempstead, Geoff began to explore his call to ministry by attending the London Bible College and Westminster College in Cambridge.

Geoff was ordained in 2000 and inducted into the Canterbury pastorate in the URC's Southern Synod, which he served for ten years. He then moved to Plume Avenue URC, his current pastorate, in 2010.

He has also served as a trustee of various charities and as a governor of a local junior school. Geoff also loves photography, football, his dog Biscuit the Basset and his family.

Sarah and Geoff have three teenage sons who are all at differing stages of their education.

Geoff is looking forward to returning home to the North West and serving the people of Mersey Synod with compassion and vigour.

He said: "We live in difficult days, but we have a God who through Jesus Christ is victorious. I am looking forward to leading the Synod through these post pandemic years – years that will help shape the Church of the future and its witness to a world in need of hope and love."

## SPRING IS COMING!

You may not have looked at the church gardens lately. They have been looking rather drab and overgrown since the soggy winter weather, but some of the church members have been working busily whenever they can, and of course individually. For example, hedges have been trimmed.

Pauline has tidied the flowerbed on the right-hand side leading to the kitchen door. Fred has been doing some strimming. Jean and Les have put some clever chemicals on the paths to get rid of the moss. I have chopped back a lot of the “jungle” on both sides of the path leading to the gate on the corner. The flower beds there have been beautiful, full of snowdrops a couple of weeks ago. I have pruned shrubs. There are lots of leaves, I think from bluebells, so they should be amazing soon.

Last week I bought and planted quite a lot of spring flowers, and they bring some much needed colour between the greenery. Over the course of the next few months, I hope to get more plants, to keep the colours going.

Of course, there has been a lot of litter, and we have binned much of it, but there is lots more to do. I, for one, hope to go regularly and keep it a bit tidier, as and when I am able. And I know there are a number of other people who hope to do work there too. Special thanks must go to Pauline, who volunteered to take black bags full of refuse to the tip. I don't think she expected quite so many as I left for her!!

**Marian Davies.**

*A former Member of Prenton, Anne Mackenzie has sent a message to Philip Roper in which she wrote that she always enjoys reading our monthly magazines. She included some recollections of her time at Prenton -*

Contact with “Prenton Congs”, as it was, is important for me as it played a very significant part in my life.

In 1951 my mother, Vera Capey, my sister, Jean, and I started worshipping at Prenton after trying the Presbyterian Church in Upton but it did not meet with our satisfaction for some reason – maybe there were no young people. So we cycled the three miles to Prenton.

Murdoch and his family were already there having moved from Glasgow a couple of years previously. Murdoch and I were received into membership by Walter Young in 1952, I think, and taught in the Sunday School, were active members of the Livingstone Fellowship, enjoyed Walter Young's choral speaking and drama events, square dances and the New Year's Eve 'Pop and Pie party', and social hours monthly after Sunday evening worship. Vernon Winchester and Alan Phillips frequently entertained with their piano skills on these evenings.

Walter Young married us in 1964 and soon after that we disappeared to India where Murdoch was ordained in 1967.

My mother was actively committed to the church for many years after that and we made visits whenever we could. In those early days I remember there used to be Missionary week-ends and Gladys Aylward came one year, and also 'Mens' Week-ends' when Mr.Sidebotham, Frank Kettlewell and my father were among the stars at the Saturday night concert!

I have visited Prenton once since Murdoch died in 2015, and it was good to share in worship that day and also to see some familiar faces.

Glenys (nee Carter) was one such person and I remember being the First Aider at the Guide Camp with Mrs Bryan Jones when Glenys dropped her sheath knife on to her foot and we had to go to the hospital if I remember rightly!

Jean Bayley and Michael Tudor were both there in those 'old' days. I am sorry to read that they have both been unwell. Please accept my greetings.

**Anne**

**DOLLS NEEDED PLEASE!**

Eileen Levell from Wallasey Village is looking for Barbie dolls or similar to dress for Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes.

If you have any Barbie or Ken style dolls that your children or grandchildren no longer play with, please let me or Eileen have them. Eileen will have great fun, washing them, doing their hair and knitting clothes to dress them, ready to be played with again.

When charity shops are open again - if you see any Barbie style dolls please let me have them too!

Thank you, **Heather.**

## CHRISTIAN AID WEEK



Christian Aid week runs from 10th to 16th May, but as we can't collect 'Door to Door' or have Christian Aid lunches and coffee mornings as we have done in previous years other avenues for raising money are needed.

So, I have decided that since I can't do what I would usually do for Christian Aid, I will do something different.

I am hoping to walk from Leasowe Lighthouse to Fort Perch Rock (café and toilets this end). The walk is 4.5 miles, so quite a stretch for me, but thankfully it's fairly flat; still, I don't promise record breaking speed! I would be grateful if you would consider sponsoring me to do this to raise money for Christian Aid.

I will be walking on Saturday 15th May 2021 starting at 10 a.m. (Weather permitting)

Jeff will be walking with me and if you would like to join us for some or all of the way we'd be delighted to see you, socially distanced, of course! (Covid regulations will allow groups of 6 to meet outdoors).



Please consider any contribution you wish to make prayerfully, and I'll let you know how you can sponsor me in May's magazine.

Yours, (in training,)

**Heather.**