

PRENTON NEWS

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



AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2021

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Church & Community Activities during school term time

Monday	1 st Tranmere Rainbows, Brownies & Guides	5.00 p.m.
Tuesday		
Wednesday	Dance Class	5.00 p.m.
Thursday	Dance Class	6.00 p.m.
Friday		
Saturday	Dance Class	9.00 a.m.

A north country choirmaster was rehearsing the hymns for Sunday telling the choir that the hymns they were to sing, and the tunes to which they were to sing them.

He said, ‘Now then “Come ye that love the Lord” to Southport’!

A voice called out, “Where are thou tekking t’rest of us?”



From the Manse

FACE TO FACE (or at least mask to mask)

1 Corinthians 13:12 says this, 'For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.'

This pandemic has been a bit like that with Zoom meetings and YouTube services but, as church has re-opened and the restrictions have lifted, we have the opportunity for more face to face, or at least mask to mask, worship and meetings.

The restrictions might be lifted but the virus is still here and, like me, you might be feeling a mixture of emotions. Of course there is excitement at meeting with people again, but there is also a nervousness about the implications for myself and others of coming back together in person.

For some the lifting of restriction will make no real difference. Some because they have largely ignored the restrictions and continued to live out their lives as near to normal, or because they are house bound and are usually unable to get out to meet with others anyway.

When I think of the issues facing us, I am reminded of Paul's teaching about 'the body'. Each part of the body has its own function, something specific, and something collective that impacts on other parts of the body. As Christians we each have a specific purpose and a collective purpose. Paul teaches that each is called and gifted for their own purpose and that together we are one body with one purpose.

As we meet more for face to face (or mask to mask) worship, meetings, and fellowship, we need to be sensitive to the feelings and needs of others. Some will be confident and bold and want to shake hands and hug, some will be more cautious and wary about physical contact. We must respect and honour each other and protect each other.

Paul also teaches us about being a stumbling block to others, not behaving in a way that will offend others. Let us bear that in mind particularly in our joining together again.

The Moderators of the URC have produced a document, 'New Freedoms, Same Responsibilities', which asks each of us to consider the way forward, particularly in the short term, as Covid-19 cases

are rising, and with rising numbers comes rising hospitalisations and deaths.

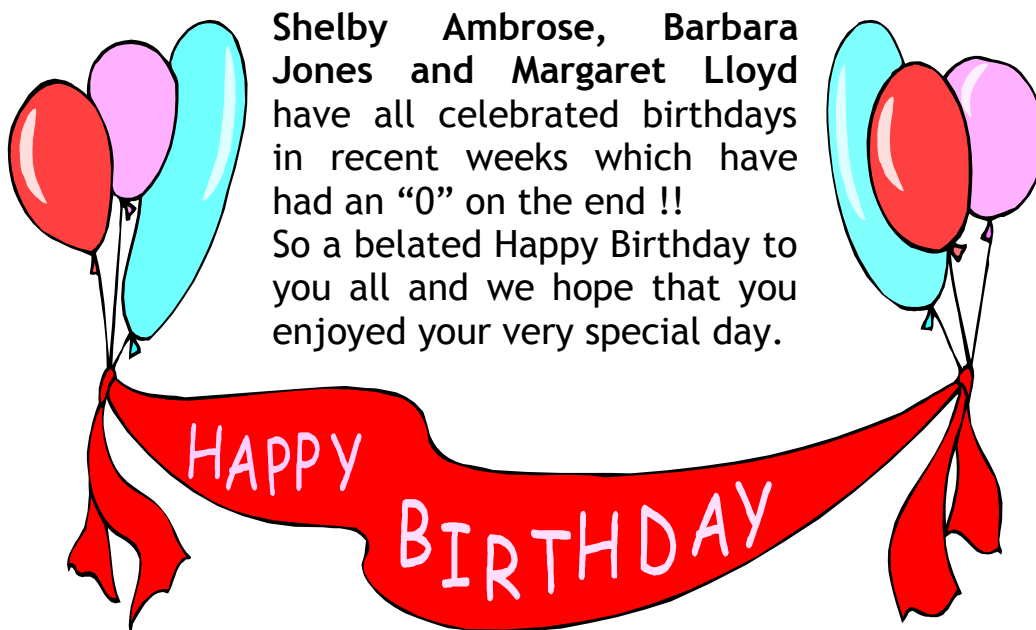
Much has already been done over the last few weeks to get our premises looking spic and span and a big 'Thank You' to all who have helped, but there is still much to do as we move into the 'new normal'.

There is a danger that we will fall back into the old familiar ways and miss the opportunity to build on the good things we've gained during the last 15 months. And, I encourage you to think about how you fit in and contribute to the life of the fellowship; how you can share the workload, how you can be an active part of the body of Christ. You may not be able to take on a physical load, but perhaps you could be a prayer warrior who is interested in what is going on and praying for those involved, perhaps an encourager, talking to others in person or by phone to listen to and share concern. You may be ready to take on a new role, if you would like to or have any ideas please let me or one of the elders know.

Whether you feel excited or nervous or both, you are not alone, you are part of a body, - the Body of Christ.

Every blessing.

Jeff.



NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY and FRIENDS

Dot Lyons passed away on 22nd July. We send our love, condolences and sympathy to her family and friends. There will be a Funeral service in Church on Tuesday 10th August.

THANK YOU

Pam & Barry Lawrence would like to thank church members and friends for their cards and flowers on moving to their new home, and for their “Get Well” wishes following Barry’s heart attack.

FABRIC

Apart from the first 6 to 9 months of Lockdown, work was started and has finished on the double fire doors outside the Kinghorn Vestry. Mark has done a fabulous job removing a few feet of concrete to get a level exit and he made and fitted the new doors.

In the passageway we had the concrete levelled and new heavy duty vinyl fitted and stuck down. This was supplied by “Bogans Carpets” and the only cost incurred by the church was the charge for fitting.

Many people have been involved with painting the walls in the Passageway; I undercoated and gloss painted all the burgundy doors; Jean & Les and many others have cleaned the walls etc. whilst this was being done, the curtains in the Kinghorn Vestry fell to the floor and thanks to Mark who fitted new curtain rails and re-hung the curtains and all is back to normal.

We have asked a young couple to cut our hedges and trim bushes etc., but up to now it is very slow going. I thought it would be done by now!! We may well have to tackle some of the work ourselves on our first Gardening Morning on Saturday 31st July when I look forward to seeing you all.

Thanks to all who help in the gardens. Pauline has offered to cut some of the lawns on her own, the others will be on a rota.

We have had two estimates to replace the very damaged railings by the cellar steps. This is a job which must be done. We are also in the process of getting prices for the necessary repairs to the roofs.

BUT let us not forget that the doors and skirting boards in the passageway, they still need painting. Volunteers please!

We thank all those who have helped to get our premises cleaned up. We cannot thank them enough including Jeff who did all the ground work on the walls.

Fred. The Convenor

“DAILY BREAD”

A number of our members get these quarterly Scripture Union Bible reading notes, and find them helpful. If you want to study the Bible and need guidance to do so, in an organised way, these notes are very useful. There also other titles available, if you wish.

When I distribute the notes for the last quarter (October to December 2021), I will include a slip about having the notes in 2022, for people to complete and return to me. However, if you do not

already receive these notes and wish to begin in 2022, please get in touch with me and I will give you a slip to complete too.

Marian

ROTAS FOR AUGUST 2021

Sunday August 1st Communion Our Elders

Duty Elder: Jean Bayley
Communion Elders: Shelby Ambrose & Marian Davies
Door Stewards: Maureen Makin, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper
Readers: Joyce Holland & Pam Lawrence
Prayers: Barry Lawrence
Sound System: Elaine Parkin
Church Flowers: Barbara Jones

Sunday August 8th Mr Brian Woodhouse

Duty Elder: Joyce Holland
Door Stewards: Joan Bradley, Sue Jones, Elaine Parkin
Readers: Pauline Green & Shelby Ambrose
Prayers: Jean Bayley
Sound System: Marian Davies
Church Flowers: Suzanne Holland

Sunday August 15th Dr Robert Pettigrew

Duty Elder: Elaine Parkin
Door Stewards: Shelby Ambrose, Joyce Holland, Barry Lawrence
Readers: Fred Foulkes & Marian Davies
Prayers: Philip Roper
Sound System: Heather Hughes
Church Flowers: Glyn & Philip Roper

Sunday August 22nd Mr Ron Taylor

Duty Elder: Fred Foulkes
Door Stewards: Jean & Les Bayley, Margaret Higson
Readers: Joan Bradley & Glyn Roper
Prayers: Pauline Green
Sound System: Marian Davies
Church Flowers: Susan Brown

Sunday August 29th Dr Philip Roper

Duty Elder: Marian Davies
Door Stewards: Joan Bradley, Pauline Green, Barbara Jones
Readers: Jean Bayley & Barry Lawrence
Prayers: Sue Jones
Sound System: Elaine Parkin
Church Flowers: Glennie Mortimer

ROTAS FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

Sunday September 5th Communion Rev Jeff Hughes

Duty Elder: Shelby Ambrose
Communion Elders: Jean Bayley & Sue Jones
Door Stewards: Elaine Parkin, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper
Readers: Joyce Holland & Pauline Green
Prayers: Heather Hughes
Sound System: Marian Davies
Church Flowers: Heather Hughes

Sunday September 12th Rev Richard Hambly

Duty Elder: Sue Jones
Door Stewards: Shelby Ambrose, Joyce Holland, Maureen Makin
Readers: Pam Lawrence & Philip Roper
Prayers: Jean Bayley
Sound System: Marian Davies
Church Flowers: Margaret Meade

Sunday September 19th Rev Jeff Hughes

Duty Elder: Joyce Holland
Door Stewards: Jean & Les Bayley, Barbara Jones
Readers: Shelby Ambrose & Marian Davies
Prayers: Barry Lawrence
Sound System: Heather Hughes
Church Flowers: Peter Carroll

Sunday September 26th Mr Ron Taylor

Duty Elder: Jean Bayley
Door Stewards: Margaret Higson, Sue Jones, Barry Lawrence
Readers: Fred Foulkes & Joan Bradley
Prayers: Claire Thomas
Sound System: Elaine Parkin
Church Flowers: Carys Evans

Sunday October 3rd Harvest



NEW FREEDOMS, SAME RESPONSIBILITIES

As the Governments in England, Scotland and Wales move towards reducing or ending Coronavirus restrictions on Places of Worship, the Synod Moderators offer the following guidance to congregations of the United Reformed Church.

1. We remind churches of the Great Commandments: to **love God with our whole being and love our neighbour as we love ourselves**. All our actions must therefore be aimed at glorifying God and showing continuing care for others. We cannot cast off all restraint and still fulfil those commandments. It is therefore fully appropriate for us to continue some of the practices with which we have become familiar.
2. Elders' Meetings (and equivalents) must **regularly review their Risk Assessment** and put in place mitigations appropriate to their current circumstances, context, and activities, which might include continued social distancing and/or wearing face coverings amongst other measures. You must maintain a safe workplace for Ministers, staff and volunteers. This could usefully become a standing agenda item.
3. **Remember those who remain clinically vulnerable or anxious** - what measures will you put in place for them - hybrid worship, separate services where current restrictions are maintained, "safer zones" in church (with social distancing and face coverings), or something else?
4. We encourage everyone to **continue the practice of washing or sanitising hands** when they arrive for worship and other activities. We would expect this to apply to external users as well as for church activities to reduce the possibility of virus transmission through touch points.
5. Similarly, **maintain a careful cleaning routine**, especially at touch points such as doors, hand rails, switches, etc.
6. These hygiene measures were shown to be effective at reducing a range of respiratory viruses (colds, 'flu), not just Covid-19. It will be a good thing to **show love to others through minimising risk to their health**, however minor the illness might be for most people.
7. As legal requirements to wear face coverings in public buildings (which include churches) are ended, we ask churches to

consider whether it is appropriate to encourage their continued use inside our buildings.

Many churches are difficult to ventilate effectively. We know that the longer we are in closed rooms, the greater the build-up of the virus and therefore risk of transmission, even to those who are vaccinated.

8. The scientific evidence on the risks of Covid-19 transmission from singing is not finally settled. Preliminary data show that singing inside, especially in rooms without adequate ventilation, DOES increase the build-up of aerosol particles. Singing together is one aspect of worship that most of us have missed greatly. Therefore, we encourage churches to continue with **a risk-managed approach to congregational singing.** Consider singing whilst wearing face coverings. If infection rates increase locally, it will be better to keep to shorter acts of worship and include less congregational singing or if necessary, pause congregational singing again.
9. The Moderators respect every individual's right to choose whether they be vaccinated. However, **we encourage people to get fully vaccinated unless there are medical reasons why they should not.** Vaccination massively reduces both the risk of illness and that of passing the virus on to others. Vaccines are not, however, 100% effective. There are known cases of people contracting Covid-19 even after receiving two doses of the vaccine. We must therefore **each take responsibility to do our part in keeping other people safe.**

“For you were called to freedom... only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another.”

(Gal 5:13 NRSV)

The Synod Moderators

July 8, 2021

A Vicar of a village arranged a short service of intercession in his parish church. A few hours before it was held, he was urgently called away and invited the local Free Church Minister, with whom he was friendly, to conduct the service for him, but on condition that the minister wore a surplice, a garment to which the latter was unaccustomed. Next day, the Vicar asked him, ‘Did all go well?’ ‘Yes,’ was the reply, ‘but oh! how glad I was afterwards to get my trousers on again!’

LICC LEARNING HUBS

During lockdown, a number of members attended some online events led by LICC (London Institute of Contemporary Christianity) introducing whole-life discipleship.

At the heart of LICCs work is the question: ‘How do we make whole-life discipleship central and unavoidable in the lives of the people and leaders of the Church in the UK?’

Learning Hubs will help us to seek answers to that question and others by giving an opportunity to participate with other local churches to be resourced, and learn from each other about how to create and sustain whole-life disciple-making communities.

Over the course of 2 years, we will journey together as church leaders, leadership teams and members of local churches to explore how church ministry can envision and equip worshippers for fruitfulness in the whole of their lives.

During the 2 years there will be 8 sessions as focussing on the following aspects of whole life discipleship.

1. Leading a whole-life disciple-making church:

This opening session is for the leadership team of the church and will look at the core principles and vision behind a whole life disciple making approach to church life. This is no silver bullet but rather a journey that will change how you think about and develop church life.

2. Culture Change for a Frontline Focus:

In this session, again for the leadership, will explore what it takes to shift the focus of a church from the ABC’s (Attendance, Buildings & Cash) to D & E - Disciple-making and Equipping.

3. Preaching with a Frontline Focus:

This session is for all preachers & leaders, as preaching is one of the primary drivers of vision within a church. It is one of the key ways we can create and nurture whole-life disciples. This session will help your preachers approach the Bible, their sermon preparation and delivery with the reality of people’s daily context in mind.

4. Praying for the Frontline:

This session is for Everyone in the Church when we will begin to think about how we equip disciples to pray for Kingdom Priorities when they are dealing with the pressure points of everyday life.

5. Worship Leading with a Frontline Focus:

This session is mainly for Worship/Choir leaders and explores how we can make the most of the time that we have together

on Sundays, so that we are empowered to worship God in everything we do, Monday to Saturday.

6. Intentional Relationships with a Frontline Focus:

This session for small or house group leaders will look at how to build a network of intentional relationships that genuinely equips disciples to live out their faith in their everyday contexts through small groups.

7. The Workplace as Your Frontline:

This session focuses on those in paid employment or interested in serving people in paid work and will look at ways we can help those in the workforce see that their work intrinsically matters to God. We'll also explore how a church can genuinely value and have a vision for workplace ministry.

8. Sharing Your Faith on the Frontline:

This session is for those who want to become more confident witnesses on their frontlines and will look at ways to build people's confidence in sharing their faith on their frontlines.

This is about LONG-TERM change; there is no 'silver bullet' quick fix.

The first session, 'Casting a Vision for Whole-Life Disciple-making', takes place on Saturday 11th September 2021. Venue TBA).

Please pray for the success of this initiative and sign up for one of the sessions. Please contact me if you would like further information.

Jeff.

“SOLO”

The “Solo” group will not yet be able to resume meetings in their original form, as you will understand. I am pretty certain we will not meet this year.

However, we can still “meet” individually by telephone, or in person in very small groups - for example, by going to visit one another, by having a coffee or a meal out, or by going for a walk or a drive. I know of a number of church members who are doing this already. It's really just a question of what you feel comfortable with. And I, for one, am being extremely cautious.

I would not like to think of anyone who attends Prenton URC feeling lonely (being alone is different - sometimes that can be quite enjoyable!!). but if you are feeling lonely - for whatever reason - pick up the phone and make contact with me, or with any Solo member.

Marian

The most successful businessman the world has ever known was Noah. He floated a successful company while the rest of the world was going into liquidation.

Coffee Morning

Many of us have been delighted to be able to meet again in person for fellowship on Sundays after such a long break and we would like to start to meet again for coffee mornings too and soon.

Although we probably have all had our vaccinations we are still all able to contract or carry the virus, and many of our members are particularly vulnerable.

As a number of those who would normally be involved in serving at the coffee morning are unavailable during August it was decided to delay the official rota and we will start officially on 1st September.



Some may wish to meet prior this during August and you're free to do this but please make individual arrangements.

There is still concern about the numbers of Covid cases rising dramatically in the Wirral region, so we will approach this cautiously and will operate slightly differently.

We will meet in the hall, to allow greater distances for those who feel more comfortable, we will have a table service and use only individually wrapped biscuits. This will allow time to assess the rise in Covid cases and the impact on our fellowship.

As we look toward the official restart on the 1st September, I would like to establish a new rota for making and serving coffee. If you would like to be included in the rota please let me know.



I WILL NOT ASSUME that because you were on the list of volunteers previously that you will be again.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Heather