

# PRENTON NEWS

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### **A HYMN by RON TAYLOR**

In 2007, I had one of those special quiet, moments with the Lord and wrote the following. I hope it might be a blessing to you:

**As I consider You, My God  
I'm lost in wonder, love and praise  
Because Your faithfulness abounds  
In every aspect of my life.**

**You gave me what I don't deserve -  
Forgiveness and a fresh new start  
To live a life that wants to bring  
Glory and honour to your name.**

**I long for others now to see  
The wonder of your love in me  
So they may also come to be  
The child You love so tenderly  
Take all my life and use it, Lord  
To heal, to comfort and to bless  
Where there is sorrow and despair  
In any corner of your world.**

**Thank You, my God, for all you've done  
Through Jesus, our arisen Lord.  
Help us to know and love Your Word  
And walk the humble path You trod.**

# FROM OUR MINISTER

## HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Poet, Alexander Pope wrote,

*“Hope springs eternal in the human breast;  
Man never is, but always to be blest.  
The soul, uneasy and confined from home,  
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.”*

In those few words Pope gives a vision of hope. But, as I sit to write this message I feel a bit hopeless - it's cold and dark outside, even though it's only two in the afternoon. It's raining and the wind is howling, and I've just watched a news update of the snowy conditions in Texas where usually, temperatures of between 20-24 degrees C this time of year are the norm. It seems that winter is well and truly in charge and spring will never arrive, and yet ....

And yet .... crocuses are poking through the front lawn and daffodils are blooming (at least on south facing walls), bulbs are showing signs of life as green shoots break the surface of the soil, buds are appearing on the trees, and bird-song is becoming more prolific. Winter might still be with us but the new life promised by the spring, is beginning to show and eager to burst forth.

As we move through Lent and look towards Easter we do so this year with hope; hope of the resurrection of course; hope of our new life in Christ, but hope also in the roll out of vaccinations with the promise that we too might 'burst forth' from our imposed and self-imposed isolation. We might feel like 'souls, uneasy and confined from home'

Work is ongoing at church to open our premises safely and, if restrictions allow, we hope to be able to mark and celebrate Easter physically as well as virtually this year.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that, **“Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see”** (Hebrews 1:11).

So, even as we experience this time of 'winter' we have hope in the spring to come and the new life it promises. And so, **“Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”** (Hebrews 10:23)

Every blessing.

Jeff

## **NEWS OF OUR CHURCH FAMILY**

We send our love, sympathy and condolences to **Margaret Meade** on the death of her husband, **Robert**, and to **Iris Hatton** and her family on the death of her husband, **Ralph**.

## **THANK YOU**

I would just like to thank everyone for their cards and messages of love, sympathy and condolence on the passing of my beloved husband, Robert. Your prayers and help are very much appreciated.

Thank you for the delightful yellow roses delivered by Fred and Anne on behalf of the Church, they really brighten up my day.

Thank you,  
**Margaret Meade**

As I write this, it is with a deep sense of gratitude to our Heavenly Father and all our friends in the fellowships of Wallasey Village URC, Prenton URC and Hamilton URC and of course to those Christian friends around the country. Our friends from the Tuesday Coffee Morning have also been friends indeed, with their loving concern. Needless to say, our daughters and grandchildren have also been a wonderful support.

Mavis and I have been overwhelmed by your prayers, love, thoughtfulness and generosity, so thank you and may God bless each of you for helping us through such a difficult time.

**Ron and Mavis**

### **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

## LOCKDOWN LOG

When we first went into Lockdown a year ago we expected it to last for 3 months or perhaps a little longer, but for many of us it's been 12 months since we have lived anything like a 'normal' life.

I've noticed that almost everything that I do takes longer than it used to, and I wonder why. There may be several reasons for this; it might be my imagination, it might be that I'm getting older and slower, it might be that I'm doing things more thoroughly, (most unlikely), it may be that I have more time, so I take more time. I don't know what the explanation is but sometimes I wonder how I will manage to do things when 'normal' returns! I do look forward to trying though!

During the period of Lent, as I have said before, rather than giving up something, I try to take up something new. I have joined the Lent study groups via Zoom and find them thought provoking, but I have also joined in following a scheme run by Premier Radio, it's called 'Give Him Five' and it suggests giving 5 minutes a day to God throughout Lent. So far these have been things that can be done without leaving home and spending nothing but time. (You can still join in either with the study groups or with Give Him Five). I listen to Christian radio stations and have heard a lot of talk about how good lockdown has been for helping us to realise how much we can do as Christians and how much closer we can get to God while we have less busyness in our lives. I find that a real challenge. Am I using the extra time I have to grow closer to God and to pray more for His purposes?

Is not being able to go to the church building stopping you and me from being church? And more than that is it stopping us from being followers of Jesus? I am using the period of Lent to bring back my focus to who I am in 'normal' times. Do you need or want to join me?

I'm still knitting, and cleaning, and washing, and ironing, and cooking, and planning what to do in the garden, and speaking to people on the phone, and attending meetings on zoom, but I'm not sure I'm giving the hours I would normally spend in fellowship with others to the best use, .... something to consider .... perhaps I could make positive use of this time? How about you?

Thankfully, I've had my first vaccine dose and look forward to the second and hopefully an easing of restrictions as soon as it's safe. Until then I'll make the most of the extra time I have, not waste it, idling it away and bemoaning the fact that I want things 'back to normal'.

Perhaps you feel the same? Let's make this abnormal time abnormally good.

Stay safe, stay well and stay in touch,

Heather

## **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2021**

The World Day of Prayer, formerly the Women's World Day of Prayer, takes place this year on Friday 5th March.

The service this year comes from the women of Vanuatu and is entitled 'Build on a strong foundation'.



Although our church has been involved in these services in past years, the current lockdown means that local services are cancelled (or postponed).

However, the International Committee have joined with the women of Vanuatu and are holding a service from 10.30 a.m. on 5th March which can be accessed through the World Day of Prayer YouTube channel or via their website: <https://www.wwdp.org.uk>. Limited numbers of the order of service are available from myself.

As a result of reduced physical services worldwide, there is great concern about funding as most of the WDP income comes from the collections taken at all services. So, if you would like to make a donation you can put it in an envelope marked 'WDP', and drop it through the church letter box. Cheques should be made payable to 'World Day of Prayer'. Alternatively, donations can be sent direct to WDP, Commercial Road, Tunbridge Wells. TN1 2RR, online through the website: <https://www.wwdp.org.uk>, or by text message: Text 2021WDP 5 to 70085 to donate £5. You can use this to donate up to £40.

Thank you, Jean

**Guidance means I can count on God. Commitment means God can count on me.**

## **MALAWI OXYGEN APPEAL.**

Many of you will remember Revd. Susan Flynn, former minister at Wallasey Village and co-ordinator of the Synod's Malawi links, Chifundo and Chanassa, over the last decade.

Susan has been helping the Scotland Malawi Partnership, specifically on the Scotland-Malawi Oxygen Supply Coordination Group, who are raising funds for oxygen supplies for Malawi, one of the poorest countries in the world and wishes to highlight the plight of the Malawi people, particularly during the current pandemic.

If you would like more information about the group and the challenges facing Malawi during the Coronavirus pandemic, or would like information about making a donation, then please visit <https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org>.

## THE GAME OF LIFE

Henry has four boys, and they are all football mad.

I took them out for a kick around the other night. Nicholas, the eldest is 12, and he and his friends had played a match against Matthew and his friends. Now Matthew is 10 and those two years make an awful lot of difference in terms of speed, skills and endurance.



Anyway, at the end of a hectic half hour the older boys had won 5 - 0. As we drove home in the car, Matthew was very quiet. I followed him into the laundry room, and just watched him while he tugged at his boots to get them off.



“I played as hard as I could, Dad”, he said, fighting back the tears, “and we still lost. I’m gonna have to start fouling!”

I’m gonna have to start fouling. That’s an understandable reaction, I know. But it got me thinking. Don’t we all tend to act like that sometimes, when things don’t go our way? Things we wouldn’t even consider doing, under normal circumstances, suddenly become alright, when the chips are down.

There’s a story told of the devil, trying to persuade a man to sin. “If I was to give you a million pounds, would you tell just one little lie?” said the devil. “Well, for that amount of money, I’d certainly think about it”, said the man.

“Would you tell a lie for ten pence then?” said the devil. “Certainly not”, said the man. “What sort of person do you think I am?”.

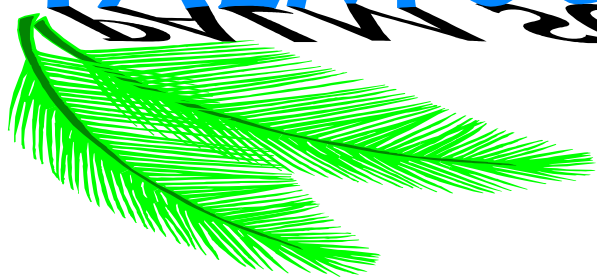
“We’ve already established that”, said Satan, “All we’re haggling about is the price!”

Life isn’t easy, and sometimes things can get on top of us. When our best efforts have resulted in a gigantic, stupendous failure, then it is time to reflect that life is a learning experience, and we don’t have to sit an exam until the course is over. There’s no shame in getting knocked down. The only shame is in lying there. Be philosophical about it. Even if you’ve fallen flat on your face, you’re still five feet further forward!

The secret of life is to play the best game we can with the cards we have been dealt and not to spend all our time complaining about the dealer!

Everywhere there is courage in the face of overwhelming odds, and cheerfulness in the face of adversity. All we have to do is open our eyes to see it and to wonder at the resilience of the human spirit.

# PALM SUNDAY



28th March

## **A MAN CALLED JESUS**

He would be known among his townsmen  
As a carpenter of wood,  
And He'd be recognised by children  
As their friend, so kind and good.

He would some day do wondrous works,  
The lame would walk, the blind would see,  
And those restored would call him 'healer'  
Wondering who this man could be.

He would be known by His disciples  
As the Master, while with love,  
He taught them of His Heavenly Father  
And His kingdom, high above.

And at the end, they would remember  
When those who went to view the dead  
Found not a body, still and lifeless,  
But an angel there instead.

And then they'd give the Galilean,  
Whom they'd followed and adored  
His rightful name for all the ages . . .  
"Jesus Christ, the risen Lord".

