

PRENTON NEWS

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



**AUGUST &
SEPTEMBER 2023**

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Church & Community Activities during school term time

Monday	1 st Tranmere Rainbows, Brownies & Guides	5.00 p.m.
Tuesday	Phoenix Dance Group	6.30 p.m.
	Guitar Group	6.30 p.m.
Wednesday	Welcome Space. Coffee & Lunch	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m.
2nd in month	Mid-Week Communion	11.45 a.m.

Donations towards the cost of the magazine would be appreciated.

From the Manse

ARE YOU PICKING ON ME?

In I Samuel we are told that ‘the Lord called Samuel again for the third time.’ You wouldn’t blame Samuel if he thought that God was ‘ganging-up’ on him. And I wonder have you ever felt ‘ganged-up’ on?

I am one of 6 with an older brother and sister so I know what it feels like to be ‘ganged-up’ on, but I also have a younger sister and two younger brothers, and they know what it feels like too, such is the balance of life. Jesus might have said ‘do unto others as you would have them do to you’ but when I was growing up with my brothers and sisters it was more ‘do one to others before they do one to you.’

‘Ganging up’ on others isn’t what we’re supposed to do but I have to say that I feel that God is doing just that at the moment, ganging up on me and my churches; it certainly feels that way because everywhere I turn the theme of church growth pops up. In my experience God does it when we’re slow on the uptake.

It started just after lockdown, when our Synod partnered with the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity (LICC) for four years and, as a church, we agreed to join in as we looked at how we, as individuals and a church, can be fruitful on our frontlines when it comes to speaking about our faith and acting out our faith. Since then, we have tried to be intentional in adopting some of what we’re learning. Some Elders have attended a number of events and there will be others for anyone who is interested.

Then, at the end of last year, Heather and I and an Elder from Prenton attended a Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCIG) conference. It was an inspiring few days, so much so, that in the New Year we will be embarking on a local course just for our church.

Then Synod decided to change the theme for 2023 from ‘Justice’ to ‘Talking Faith’ with the launch taking place just a couple of weeks ago which Fred, Heather and I managed to get to. Again, this was an inspiring day with much to feedback but there will be other events for people to attend.

Whilst all of this was going on my sabbatical was nipping away in the background. It should have happened 3 years ago, but it has now finally caught up with me. So, I will likely be on sabbatical from September to November this year for 3 months.

Initially I was struggling for a subject to study, but it became obvious that ‘church growth’ was to be the focus. God has a way of ganging-up on people when he wants something.

I know that you will be in good hands with the Elders but if there are any questions in the meantime please ask.

We thank God that there are signs of growth in our fellowship, and we need to continue praying and working for growth, not so much to keep our church open but to lead others to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. That is our most important end.

So, I hope you will pray for me and Heather as we prepare and embark on this journey and that when I return from sabbatical you might be fired up too, in helping God's kingdom growth here in Prenton.

God bless.

Jeff.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY & FRIENDS

We remember in our prayers all the members and friends who are, at the present time, unable to join us regularly on a Sunday morning and in particular: **Jeanette Adams, Peter & Joan Carroll, Iris Hatton, Don Howard, Jo Johns, Julie & Tim Jones, Dylis**, who is in hospital & **John Letchford, Margaret Lloyd, Nora McGrath, Glennie Mortimer** who has had a stroke and **Mary Segar**.

We send our love, prayers and good wishes for a speedy recovery, to **Pam Lawrence** who has spent time in Arrowe Park Hospital, **Maureen Makin** and **Elaine Parkin** who are all suffering with chest infections and/or very heavy colds. We hope they will all be back in church in the very near future.

THANK YOU

Maureen Makin would like to thank everyone for their concern, kindness, prayers and for the Church flowers whilst she has been recovering from a broken wrist and her other hospital investigations. Your thoughts and actions are very much appreciated.



I would like to thank all of the fellowship for their love, prayers, support, cards and gifts over the last months while I have been waiting for and going through my hip surgeries.

I am very happy to report that I have two new hips, both of which appear to be working well and I am now without arthritic pain, which is wonderful.

As my recovery continues I will be able to get around and involved in things again.

I thank God for His wonderful healing power and providence.

Heather

At the time of going to press, Heather is back in hospital. We hope she will be home soon.

FROM OUR CHURCH SECRETARY

JEFF

I think most of you know that Jeff has an overdue sabbatical. He and Heather will not be with us from the beginning of September to the end of November. That may seem a long time, but we will be fine as Jeff has already taught us to do things we thought we couldn't do!

I hope you all realise that it isn't three months holiday. Jeff has to work on a project and has chosen to look at Church Growth. Not a surprise as we know already of his interest and some of us have already benefitted from LICC events.

We wish Jeff and Heather well and are sure they will come back full of ideas from which we will benefit.

During these months please get in touch with me or your Elder if you have a problem. We may not be as good as Jeff or have an immediate answer, but we'll learn together and will have someone we can get in touch with if needed.

THANK YOU

We all need to say a big THANK YOU to Donna who stepped into the breach when Kerry, our cleaner, was taken ill. Kerry is much better but she will not be back until August. Donna has very kindly offered to do the cleaning until then and we are very grateful as a lot of us struggle with such tasks these days. So, again, many thanks to Donna for your help.

SHOE BOXES

It's that time of the year again, just as many of us are thinking about summer holidays!

We will be collecting items to fill the boxes over the next few months. I will suggest categories each week as a reminder, but if you see a suitable bargain, bring it along at any time.

There is a red crate on the back pew where you can put your donations. Heather has bought exercise books already and she is the one who usually keeps us going. She won't be around as much because of Jeff's sabbatical, so it's up to us to "do it ourselves".

Let's see if we can fill more boxes than last year. Thank you.

Jean

*Your weaknesses and vulnerabilities do not stop God using you.
In fact, God often uses our weaknesses more than our strengths.*

JEFF AND HEATHER'S OPEN HOUSE

Saturday 26th August

Between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

As Jeff starts his sabbatical in September our Open House is a little earlier than usual this year. (We hope for good weather!)

We would like to invite the fellowship of Prenton and Wallasey Village Churches to join us and share some refreshments at our home.

This is our way of saying 'Thank You for your love, prayers and support over the last 12 months.

We would be delighted to see YOU.

Jeff and Heather x

TALKING FAITH

On Saturday 17th June over 100 people met at Hoole URC to share time thinking about 'Talking Faith'. Mersey Synod's Mission and Discipleship Committee had decided that this should be Mersey Synod's theme for 2023, and I'm delighted to say that we have decided to continue this as the theme for 2024 too.

We met at 9.30 a.m. for a cuppa and then shared worship. The Moderator, Rev Geoff Felton, introduced the theme of the day.

We heard an inspirational keynote speech from Sam Ward from the Message Trust who had us all sharing laughter and tears as he described his life as a Christian. He lives and serves God in Openshaw, Manchester and lives in a very poor and very deprived area. He has chosen to live here, along with his wife and children, and he shares his life and the gospel with those who live around him, addicts, prostitutes, lost and lonely people.

He has seen God working in their lives and his own, by being himself and being open to share his life and faith with them.

Reading Luke 10: 1-12

He talked about Jesus' commission to his followers, He appointed them to do His mission, we are chosen and appointed too.

Sam pointed out the Verbs of Mission

They were **sent** in pairs. Pairs for accountability and encouragement.

They were told to **pray** first and then go in expectation.

To **go** as lambs into wolves; to go peaceably, gently, vulnerably, without show. To take nothing, carry no baggage, the Gospel has all that it needs, you don't need to add to it.

To **greet** nobody, **focus**, don't to be distracted from the purpose.

To **enter** homes and lives, if you are invited (and feel safe), go in and share. Bring peace, don't go aggressively forcing an agenda.

Stay, where God has placed you is where you should stay, give this time, mission is long term.

Eat and drink. Don't complicate things, it is in the ordinary things of life that we find opportunity to share Jesus.

Heal the sick, understand this as not only miraculous healing but also the healing of lives that are missing the knowledge and love of God.

Tell, those we come alongside every day.

This was a great way to start a great day.

There were 4 'workshops' and each of us went to each of them.

We looked at:

Talking Faith in our everyday lives.

Talking Faith with confidence

Talking Faith with children and young people

Talking Faith and difficult conversations.

Tactics, ideas and different but very do-able, comfortable, and everyday ways of sharing our faith.

The day was brought to a close by Mark Greenwood, an author and Evangelist from the Elim Church who spoke with humour and confidence bringing the whole day to a conclusion that sent us all home with hope in our hearts, a challenge for our lives and an assurance that we could Talk About Faith when it is at the heart of our everyday lives.

We closed with a time of uplifting worship.

This is just a brief overview of a splendid, inspirational, realistic achievable day with a delicious lunch too.

When the follow-up events happen don't miss out!

Jeff

DIARY FOR AUGUST 2023

AUGUST		
Tuesday 1st	9.30 a.m. 1.30 p.m.	Elders' Meeting Conversations with God
Wednesday 2nd	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m. 7.00 p.m.	Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch Church Meeting
Sunday 6th	11.00 a.m.	Holy Communion. Rev Jeff Hughes
Wednesday 9th	10.00 a.m. 11.45 a.m. 12.15 p.m.	Welcome Space Coffee Morning Mid-Week Communion Lunch
Sunday 13th	11.00 a.m.	Dr Philip Roper
Wednesday 16th	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m.	Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch
Sunday 20th	11.00 a.m.	Rev Jeff Hughes
Wednesday 23rd	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m.	Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch
Saturday 26th	2.00 p.m.	Open House at the Manse
Sunday 27th	11.00 a.m.	Mr Ron Taylor
Monday 28th		Bank Holiday
Wednesday 30th	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m.	Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch

Notice in a Vet's Waiting Room:
"BE BACK IN FIVE MINUTES. SIT! STAY!"



DIARY FOR SEPTEMBER 2023

SEPTEMBER		
Sunday 3rd	11.00 a.m.	Communion. Mr Brian Woodhouse
Tuesday 5th	1.30 p.m.	Conversations with God
Wednesday 6th	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m.	Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch
Sunday 10th	11.00 a.m.	Mr Brian Woodhouse
Wednesday 13th	10.00 a.m. 11.45 a.m. 12.15 p.m.	Welcome Space Coffee Morning Mid-Week Communion ? Lunch
Sunday 17th	11.00 a.m.	Mr Bernie Frost Items required for the October & November Church Magazine
Wednesday 20th	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m.	Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch
Friday 22nd	1.00 p.m.	Masonic Ladies
Sunday 24th	11.00 a.m.	Mr Ron Taylor
Wednesday 27th	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m.	Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch
OCTOBER		
Sunday 1st	11.00 a.m.	Harvest Festival and Holy Communion led by our Elders

If you are going away on holiday or have already been away, why don't you write a small item about your holiday experiences for the October & November Church magazine?



CaféJam

spread some song across your heart

**Praise God through singing - café jam
worship is café style, informal and for all
those of any ability who love to sing or just
listen.**

Lots of cakes and drinks provided.

When: Sunday 17th September 2023

Time: 6.30 p.m. start

Venue: Wallasey Village URC

Wallasey Village, Wallasey CH45 3LP

(Parking is very limited so please park on side streets)

For more details or to book Café Jam Band for your church
please contact Rita on 07838 103310 or
synodclerk@urcmerseysynod.org.uk



FROM THE PEWS

I am sure you have all seen this before in some form or another but this one struck me as “different” and appropriate to “Church Growth”.

TEN little Christians standing in a line

One disliked the Vicar, then there were nine.

NINE little Christians stayed up very late

One slept in on Sunday, then there were eight.

EIGHT little Christians on the road to Heaven

One took the Lower Road, then there were seven.

SEVEN little Christians got into a fix,

One disliked the music, then there were six.

SIX little Christians very much alive,

But one lost his temper, and then there were five.

FIVE little Christians waiting by the door,

One joined a passing friend, and then there were four.

FOUR little Christians, cheerful as can be

One told an unpleasant joke, then there were three.

THREE little Christians knew not what to do,

One joined a “sporty” crowd, then there were two.

TWO little Christians - our rhyme is nearly done

Quarrelled with each other and then there was one.

ONE lone Christian won his neighbour true,

Brought him to church, then there were two.

TWO earnest Christians, each won one more

That doubled their numbers, and then there were four.

FOUR sincere Christians worked very late,

But each won another, and then there were eight.

EIGHT splendid Christians - quite a decent team,

Worked so well together they raised it to sixteen.

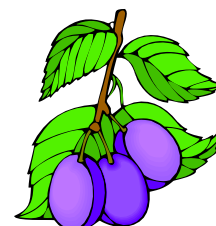
SIXTEEN devout Christians doubled six times more

Raised a mighty army of **ONE THOUSAND AND TWENTY-FOUR**.

As seen in Christ Church, Birkenhead magazine

DID YOU KNOW that Plums are grown on every continent except Antarctica, and are one of our oldest cultivated foods. Their stones have been found on archaeological sites with the remains of olives, grapes and figs.

You learn something new every day!!



A VARIATION ON THE COMMANDMENTS

1. You shall not worry for worry is the most unproductive of all human activities.
2. You shall not be fearful. For most of the things we fear never come to pass.
3. You shall not carry grudges, for they are the heaviest of all life's burdens.
4. You shall face each day as it comes. You can only handle one day at a time anyway.
5. You shall not take problems to bed with you, for they make very poor bedfellows.
6. You shall not borrow other people's problems. They can better care for them than you.
7. You shall not try to relive yesterday for good or ill; it is forever gone. Concentrate on what is happening in your life and be happy now!
8. You shall be a good listener, for only when you listen do you hear ideas different from your own.
9. You shall not become "bogged down" by frustration, for 90% of it is rooted in self-pity and will only interfere with positive action.
10. You shall count your blessings, never overlooking the small ones, for a lot of small blessings add up to a big one.

From *A Bucket of Surprises*, J. John and Mark Stibbe, Monarch Books

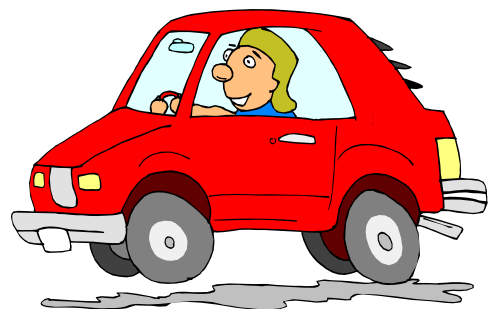
MY LITTLE CAR

I've never owned a Bentley
Nor driven a Rolls-Royce,
My car is only tiny,
Yet it's my perfect choice.

I can't say it's the newest,
We've been friends for a while,
Sharing bumps along life's road
And joys with every smile.

It may look scratched and dented,
And in places, slightly bruised,
But how it sings in freedom
As along the lanes we cruise!

Will we travel to the countryside
Or head off to the sea?
I wonder where we'll go today
My little car and me.



As seen in the Fireside Book

ROTAS FOR AUGUST 2023

Duty Elder

August 6th Shelby Ambrose
13th Elaine Parkin
20th Pauline Green
27th Sue Jones

Communion Elders

August 6th Jean Bayley & Pauline Green

Door Duty

August 6th Elaine Parkin, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper
13th Jean & Les Bayley, Barbara Jones
20th Joan Bradley, Margaret Higson, Barry Lawrence
27th Pauline Green, Maureen Makin, Elaine Parkin

Readers

August 6th Joyce Holland & Pam Lawrence
13th Shelby Ambrose & Philip Roper
20th Jean Bayley & Heather Hughes
27th Glyn Roper & Joan Bradley

Prayers of Intercession

August 6th Sue Jones
13th Claire Thomas
20th Philip Roper
27th Barry Lawrence

Sound System

August 6th Heather Hughes
13th Marian Davies
20th Elaine Parkin
27th Marian Davies

Church Flowers

August 6th Suzanne Holland
13th Glyn & Philip Roper
20th
27th Glennie Mortimer

ROTAS FOR SEPTEMBER 2023

Duty Elder

September	3rd	Jean Bayley
	10th	Fred Foulkes
	17th	Shelby Ambrose
	24th	Elaine Parkin

Communion Elders

September	3rd	Sue Jones & Elaine Parkin
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Door Duty

September	3rd	Margaret Higson, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper
	10th	Jean & Les Bayley, Joan Bradley
	17th	Barbara Jones, Sue Jones, Barry Lawrence
	24th	Pauline Green, Margaret Higson, Maureen Makin

Readers

September	3rd	Barry Lawrence & Fred Foulkes
	10th	Joyce Holland & Marian Davies
	17th	Pam Lawrence & Philip Roper
	24th	Shelby Ambrose & Jean Bayley

Prayers of Intercession

September	3rd	Claire Thomas
	10th	Pauline Green
	17th	Jean Bayley
	24th	Sue Jones

Sound System

September	3rd	Marian Davies
	10th	Elaine Parkin
	17th	Marian Davies
	24th	Marian Davies

Church Flowers

September	3rd	Heather Hughes
	10th	Anne Foulkes
	17th	
	24th	Carys Evans