

**Heaton Mersey
Methodist Church
August Newsletter**



Minister
Rev Raj Patta,
Minister@hmmc.org.uk
Tel. 0161 432 2925
Day off Monday

Church Development Worker
Mrs Tracy Brennan
tracy@hmmc.org.uk
Tel. 07598 572904
Day off Friday

Office Administrator
Christine Hufton
admin@stockportcircuit.org.uk
Tel. 0300 0110015
(Mon, Wed - Fri 10am - 4pm)

We hope you have enjoyed receiving our newsletters. Why not pass it on to your neighbour or a friend?
Also if you know of any special birthday's, deaths or births, please let me know. Tracy.

Happy Birthday to
Heather Panter-Jones
and Pat Winsor.

Wedding Anniversary
Congratulations

Pru and Jonathan Stubbs 15 years.
Hazel and Chris White on 10 years.

For up to date information check out the following websites:

www.hmmc.org.uk
www.StockportCircuit.org.uk

Also follow us on Facebook.

I recently came across this post about the Beatitudes from Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford. Even if you aren't on social media I think they would still be relevant.

**At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount,
Jesus commends eight beautiful qualities.
But what do the Beatitudes mean for social media and life online?**

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

I will remember that my identity comes from being made and loved by God, not from my online profile.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted

This world is full of grief and suffering. I will tread softly and post with gentleness and compassion.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth

I will not boast or brag online, nor will I pull others down.

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled**

There are many wrongs to be righted. I will not be afraid to name them and look for justice in the world.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy

*I will not judge others but be generous online.
I will be conscious of my own failings.*

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God

I will be truthful and honest, and I will not pretend to be what I am not.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God

I will seek to reconcile those of different views with imagination and good humour.

**Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**

I will not add to the store of hate in the world, but I will try to be courageous in standing up for what is right and true.

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Playtime@Church

Playtime@Church closed its doors in March, and we are still closed! But the Playtime@Church community continues to exist. We are communicating through emails, texts and social distancing visits. It is not known when we will be able to meet together again and in what capacity it will be. Above all else we want to make sure that every family and all the volunteers feel safe to come back together.

Every year some of our children leave us as they move onto big school or nursery. This year 10 children will move on. It feels strange not to have our leaving party-lots of fun, games and food. But just as importantly every child leaves with a bible story book and our prayers and blessings. This year has been different. Each child still has received their leaving gift pack but it's been done 2 metres apart on doorsteps. We've missed our farewell hugs and that end of an era feeling.

I received a beautiful card that said this: Just a note of appreciation for all your amazing work you do in creating a brilliant playgroup. Thanks also for your help and advice to two frazzled mum's-you've been a life saver!

Both of them have known the love and vital support that comes from being at Playtime@Church. They both know that that love and support is there because we are church. Many of the parent and carers confide in us the worries and stresses of their lives and because of this we as a Playtime@Church team meet monthly to pray. For some it's the little things such as bedtime routines, for others is losing a parent to cancer. We are there to support, love and pray for each member of our group.

This pandemic has made us examine what we do and how we do it. We must do church differently. My passion is to be able to show the love of God in a real practical way, to share God's love, care and concern for individual people who have real needs. Cathy and Raj asked the question "Is our church being missed in our community?" I must answer that yes, the community that is Playtime@Church have missed us. We share the gospel in a very special way to our families. We show God's love and generosity in the way we serve. We share our stories of faith in conversation. We invite them to get alongside us as we support the Foodbank, Wood Street Mission and other charities.

And of course, we invite them to join in celebrating our Church festivals such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas in church. There is an acceptance that at some point there will be a Christian input: we are called Playtime@Church after all!

Bereavement Bags

I recently came across an idea of giving those who have been bereaved during lockdown something to use in that time of grief. Bereavement bags contain a handmade card, a bible reading, a blessing, a poem, a tealight, an angel and a packet of forget-me not seeds. The intention is to give these to friends and neighbours as a support from our church. I have some bags already made up if you would like one to give to someone. Please contact me via phone or email.



Tracy Brennan.

Meg (Bailey) 'offered' to work as a Missionary Nurse with the Methodist church. Having been 'accepted' she had some preparation time at Kingsmead College in Birmingham and a 'valedictory' service, she sailed for Kenya on the SS Kenya in May 1968. This was the last time it was possible to sail to Kenya round the 'Horn of Africa'. After that travel to Kenya was always by aeroplane. The journey by sea took about 3 weeks. She shared a cabin with a 'Moravian Missionary'-a Swiss Doctor who was bound for Tanzania.



The arrangement was that Meg would go to work as a nurse at the Methodist Hospital at Ngao. Ngao was an isolated village North of Malindi-accessible only by crossing the causeway-through the Tana River at a small village called Tarasa. A doctor, Peter Fox and his family were already stationed there.

Here a section of Meg's writings sent home during May 1968.

Thursday 9th May 1968 Somewhere in the Bay of Biscay

I am just beginning to find my way around with some sort of confidence. For the first 24hrs we would walk one way with great determination and then turn about and head off in the opposite direction with equal determination. MY wonderful sense of direction has now come to the rescue!! (Just discovered-as not evident previous to this!) Crossing the Bay of Biscay- there were gaps at dinner-of course I have the constitution of an ox.

There are disadvantages - to being on board. Having a bath for instance. It is no good sitting at one end, because periodically the water all departs to the other end leaving you marooned. The only hope is to sit somewhere in the middle, where the water swishes past you at intervals.

I have just been having a hilarious game of table-tennis. The table is under the covered part of the promenade Deck, which means not only does the boat rock from side to side and end to end, but also here is a considerable breeze whistles round the deck, which all adds to the fun. I'm sure I must have lost pounds - well at least a couple of ounces!

We have had 2 emergency drills already. The cabins are quite small and the door opens inwards. Try doing it with a great big life-jacket on-it takes some manoeuvring..... I have decided it is easier to get dressed in the corridor.

Sat 18th May 68

We had a very interesting morning in Dakar. Wandering round a cottage industry 'village' especially erected for tourists-of course with prices to match. We were later taken to a new hotel with a lovely view of the coastline and surrounding countryside. And strangely enough with one accord we said "How lovely to see the sea again". We had by then been on land approx. 2 hrs. Whether we shall feel the same at Durban after 11 days at sea and a trip round the Cape-I don't know.

Yesterday we came close to the shore (about 4 miles) in order to see the sunrise over Cape Town. I don't think I have ever seen anything so beautiful. Somehow I am not getting any of the things done that I intended. I.e. letters Swahili (I am only up to page 5)

Weds May 29th 68

Well, we disembark tomorrow ... It seems we shall be arriving at Mombasa in the rain. (Now only approx. 250 miles to go) (Incidentally our table won the Friday night Quiz again. Wasn't that splendid!) Monday night was Gala night & fancy dress-a jolly good time was had by all. I went as 'Madam Butterfly making wings out of the yellow nylon net.

This is part of a letter from the hospital where Meg spent many years.

July 2020

Greetings to you all from Maua Methodist Hospital Kenya.

On 6th June President Kenyatta extended the COVID precautions for a further 30 days. There remains a complete ban on international flights; a 9pm to 5am curfew; travel restrictions depending on the county; mask wearing in public places, no church/mosque services; all contributing a slower rate of infection than you had, but new cases are still increasing. Each county has been ordered to have 300 COVID beds in preparation for cases requiring hospitalisation.

On July 6th the President announced that the ban on international flights remains until 1st August, certain travel restrictions within the country are relaxed, but the curfew remains, and he encouraged people to continue wearing masks, handwashing and keeping distance from one another. People may go to church/mosque as long as there are less than 100 people, and no-one under the age of 18 or over the age of 59. The Chapel devotions in the hospital have resumed.

In Maua we have had our first confirmed case of COVID, unfortunately the patient died. Since then we have had a few cases and 18 of our staff were quarantined. All eventually tested negative and are back at work. Our patient numbers are way down and we are in unprecedented financial difficulties. Please pray with us for wisdom in decision-making by the management. They are very stressed.

Your prayers are so much appreciated.

God bless you

Barbara (Dickinson & Dr Claire Smithson)

Dear all at Heaton Mersey Methodist Church,

My names Joshua Openshaw and as you may know I have been the Christians In Schools Heaton's worker for the past year.

It has been a fantastic experience working alongside some lovely primary schools in the Heaton's with the support of the Heaton's Church Partnership. Even though we now find ourselves in strange times there have still been many fond memories and highlights from the past year of seeing God at work.

This has included delivering Easter and Christmas projects with the Nursery class at Didsbury Road Primary School, where we shared in worship together singing Christmas and Easter songs and were taught some songs of theirs too! At Mersey Vale Primary we made shakers with the reception class which they used in their Christmas rendition of 'Little Donkey'. At Norris Bank Primary we helped with the RE week delivering our sessions on Jesus to two excitable Year 4 classes! Tithe Barn has been a joy to deliver RE lessons to on everything from 'Why Is The World Special?' to 'Why Is The Church Special?'. At the end of these lessons we sang 'My Lighthouse' together which they enjoyed so much they wanted to continue to sing even after we had left!

God has proved time and again that he is faithful, honours the hard work we put in to preparation and uses the lessons and projects to bring people to His son Jesus.

One of the Bible verses that have stood out to me at work and in my personal life this year has been 1 Samuel 17:47. "All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

Something which God has been teaching me is that we must rely on him to win our battles for us and stop trying to do things in our own strength. Whilst I have been working with the Christians In Schools Trust for the past three years I have also been exploring whether I have been called to ordained ministry in the Church of England. This past month that calling has been confirmed by a Bishops Advisory Panel and starting this October I will begin training in Oxford. The journey to get to this point has not been easy. I have had doubts, tried to take control of things and often had anxiety about what the future might hold. God has really had to let me know to leave things up to him, trust him and know that He battles for me, and the outcome will be what seems good to Him.

I'd just like to finish by saying a big thank you to the people have been a part of this journey over the past few years with me. Its been exciting, challenging and an opportunity to grow and see God at work. The prayers, encouragement and support have meant a lot to me so please continue to pray for me as I embark on this next phase of my journey seeking to follow Gods will.

Josh.



Christians in Schools Trust
Serving schools in Stockport

Some prayer points for CiST

- Please give thanks for a great staff team and extremely supportive trustees.
- We give thanks for the churches who have recently expressed an interest in partnering with the trust to reach out to unchurched young people.
- Please pray for our staff team, who are all very frustrated at not being able to do what they believe the Lord has called them to do.
- Joshua Openshaw who is the dedicated CiST worker for the Heaton's has been accepted for training in the C of E ministry. He will leave CiST at the beginning of September 2020 to begin his training. Please give thanks for all that Josh has brought to the team and to schools in his time with us. Please pray for the rest of the team as they re-adjust.
- Please pray for the trustees of the trust as we consider what our role with both churches and schools will look like in September. We are having a meeting on Tuesday August 25th to pray over and discuss this. Please pray that we will know the will and leading of the Lord.