

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)

For up to date information check
out the following websites:

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

Also follow us on Facebook.

Photos of our recent 'Heart Art'
can be found on our website on
the 'Lockdown Activities' tab.

We sent our condolences to Rev
Cathy Bird on the death of her
mum.

Birthday greetings went to
Chris Cowlshaw and Liz Taylor.

Food Collection
Saturday 13th March
10.30am till 12noon

We need: Cereal bars, jams,
peanut butter, pasta sauce and
crisps.

Tins: veg, fruit, tomatoes,
custard and rice pudding.

If you would find it easier Tracy
can collect your donations.



I will speak out. Singing the Faith 702

I will speak out for those who have no voices ;
I will stand up for the rights of all the oppressed ;
I will speak truth and justice ;

I'll defend the poor and the needy ;

I will speak out for those who have no choices ;
I will cry out for those who live without love ;
I will show God's compassion to the crushed
and broken in spirit ;

I will lift up the weak in Jesus' name.

**Dave Bankhead, Ray Goudie, Sue Rinaldi,
Steve Bassett**

Isaiah 58:6-8

“The kind of fasting I want is this:
Remove the chains of oppression
and the yoke of injustice,
and let the oppressed go free.

Share your food with the hungry
and open your homes
to the homeless poor.

Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear,
and do not refuse to help your own relatives.

Dear Heaton Mersey Methodist Church,

Lenten Season's greetings to you all.

As we enter into yet another season of Lent, and for a second time in the Pandemic, we are called to take this time in seeking ways in translating the meaning and message of the Cross relevant for our times today. As I think of Lent, I remember my childhood days, where we as a family attended Lenten cottage prayer meetings for all the forty days, meditating on the entire story of the Cross of Jesus Christ. Year after year we were longing for those forty-day meditations, and it was such a spiritual exercise in understanding the meaning and message of Cross. Those were the days we had power outage, and so we had carried a petromax lantern every evening as we gathered for these cottage prayers, and that lantern served as a symbol for our Lent. That symbol, 'Lenten Lantern' has had a huge impact on me, and every year during the season of Lent I think of that image, where it shed so much light, for Cross offers light and grants strength in facing the challenges of life. I was also told, when electricity wasn't still a reality, my grandfather and my grandmother who served as a local catchiest/evangelists always carried a 'lantern' whenever they went on to the cottage prayer meetings and visits. So, for this season of Lent, when we are still in the lockdown because of the pandemic, I want to bring up this image, 'lantern' to symbolise Lent, for the Cross of Jesus Christ serves as a lantern, bringing us light and hope in our own contexts today. May you all have a meaningful season of Lent. The circuit is offering Lenten Bible studies on every Wednesday on Zoom, which is on the 'Life Changing Stories' from the Book of Acts. Please do join in those studies.

Thank you all for joining in the Mission open evening that we had last month to discuss the way forward in our mission work. As it was emphasised, community, pastoral support and worship happens to be the core mission priorities for our church, and let us wait on God for God's leading so that we will continue to be a missional church, sharing the love of Christ to all people in our neighbourhood. Please keep in prayer for the future of our church.

If it wasn't for lockdown, we as 'Heaton Churches Together,' would have had a 'walk of witness' for Good Friday, but unfortunately we are not able to do it in the current circumstances. However, can I please encourage each of us to spend that day in prayer for the Heaton.

In the context of the vaccines now being rolled out, we are thinking of this idea of 'Twinning your Vaccine,' where those of us who have received the vaccine can twin our vaccine with people who cannot afford a vaccine in the poorer countries by paying for the two jabs we receive, through the Covax programme of the Unicef. By joining in this 'Twinning your vaccine' programme, we can show our care, our service, our friendship and our support to people living in the Global south, and we can strive in ensuring towards making the vaccine available and accessible to all people in all countries. If you feel prompted to support this idea, do contact me or Tracy.

May God continue to journey with us during this season of Lent, and may we draw nearer and nearer to the Cross of Christ. The resurrection of Jesus Christ offers hope for a new life and may that Spirit strengthen us during these tough and uncertain times.

Stay blessed. Thanking you.

Regards,

Raj Bharat Patta 19th February 2021

Join Unicef's critical mission

The plan is ambitious. The scale and speed – unprecedented.

Covid-19 is the biggest global crisis since World War Two. And children won't be safe until everyone they rely on is safe.

With your support, Unicef will deliver 2 billion Covid-19 vaccines for health workers and the most high risk people on our planet.

From buying and transporting supplies through to administering the vaccine, you'll help deliver history. Your donation will ensure:

- vaccines get to even the most remote places in the world
- vaccines are safely stored using cold chain equipment
- health workers are protected and trained to vaccinate their communities

Donate now and help protect health workers in low- and middle-income countries.
A gift of £44 could transport 25 doses of Covid-19 vaccines.

unicef 
for every child



National Day of Reflection - A day to reflect, grieve and remember – 23 March 2021

The National Day of Reflection on 23 March 2021 marks the first anniversary of the date that the first lockdown started. Over 3 million people have been bereaved since the first lockdown began. Behind the statistics and whatever the cause, every death has been devastating for their loved ones. Many of those bereaved have not been able to hold loved one's hands as they were dying, properly say goodbye, comfort or even hug each other. They have been unable to mourn as they would in 'normal' times and will be more likely to struggle with the long-term effects of grief.

The National Day of Reflection will give the nation and communities a moment to remember, grieve and celebrate everyone who has died during this time and show support for our families, friends and colleagues who are grieving. The day is being led by Marie Curie and has been developed in partnership with other organisations who will get involved as part of a movement to support each other.

For more information look at the following website: www.mariecurie.org.uk/dayofreflection

If anyone has any ideas about what we can do as a church to walk alongside those who are grieving please speak to Tracy. It could be as simple as putting some daffodils in your window or tying a yellow heart to the church railings. Any ideas would be welcome.

Update on New Worker Post

Leadership met prior to the Church Open Mission Meeting in January to provide some thoughts and ideas for the meeting.

The first question to address was - What is the purpose of our Church today in 2021? Once we know our purpose, we can think about who we need & what do we want. Is our primary responsibility to look after the people that come in to church or to look after wider community?

As you will appreciate there were many ideas, thoughts and suggestions from the 13 people present. Our work within the community is important and has developed during the last 12 months with the work with FRESH and the food pantry. Contact has continued with the families we are in contact with via social media, and the Christmas trail. Other aspects have been harder to maintain such as Holiday at Home but still a vital part of our mission.

As a church we have worshiped in different ways but also remained a worshipping community, praying and supporting each other. Going forward the whole church family will require pastoral support as we come out of lockdown and try and rebuild our church community.

The meeting agreed that Mission and Pastoral Work was needed but could one person do both, particularly as general funds are very low at the moment and not as many hours may be possible for this post. Could the pastoral work/support come from within?

The meeting asked Leadership to look at the possibility to employ a mission worker for our Church but with some achievable aims. Leadership need to consider what these could be and need to draw up a job description and take things forward. They will report back to Church Council in March.

Church needs to take ownership, can't expect all mission work to be done by someone we employ, church family need to support the work that goes on.

Sue Ainsworth (Leadership Team)

Looking back at last year's March Newsletter, when we were unaware of what was about to happen in terms of Covid, I was running Playtime@church, WLTD0?, and Sunday club. I was preparing to lead the café church for Mothering Sunday and the church was looking forward to Lent studies based on the TV programme The Chosen. The rotas were all prepared for who was preaching, doing door duty, coffee etc. How things have changed for all of us! During the first few weeks I started putting together some resources for our families which included craft ideas as well as bible stories and things to do on daily exercise. I also printed some worship at home resources for those who weren't able to join in the Zoom circuit service. Nine families have been receiving their pack every month since and fourteen people receive worship at home and newsletters fortnightly. I never dreamed that I would still be doing this!

Family Church has been meeting monthly on Zoom with four families attending regularly and some members of the congregation have joined in too. It isn't easy but we try our best! I feel its so important just to see each other and I know how much they miss coming to church. One boy said this: "I want to go back to Family Church with toast and juice and the cartoons of Jesus we watch on the wall." We were able to meet briefly at Christmas when we did our Nativity Trail. We are really hoping and praying we can do something similar at Easter.

During the first lockdown I began to write the newsletter and notices to keep everybody up to date with all the news. I hope everyone feels that they know what has been happening over the last year. If you or anyone you know, would like to receive printed newsletters or worship at home resources, please let me know. If you would like to contribute to any notices or newsletters, or want to share your story again, I would love to hear from you.

Early on in lockdown Ev Speak suggested we met on Zoom weekly to pray. Zoom has been a learning curve for many of us. I'd never used it before but quickly set up an account and tried ways of making it work. Some of us had practice meetings which were great fun! If you still haven't managed to Zoom I'd love to help you! Although we are unable to meet in person its so good to be able to chat to others and see them. As well as a weekly prayer time and the Sunday morning service we have now started a coffee and chat which everybody is welcome to join in.

You will know that we have continued to support Mersey Vale School with our Food Pantry but we have also supported ten families from All Saints Primary School and earlier on in lockdown we also took some food parcels to Priestnall School. See the front page for details on our next car park collection. Many thanks for all the food and cash donations you have made. I believe generosity is at the heart of mission. Not just money but time and energy and prayer.

It's been quite difficult to stay in touch with the community around us but we have had two community engagements. Firstly, at Christmas we asked people to attach a star to our railings. It was amazing to see more than 30 stars had been attached. In the beginning of February a couple of us put up hearts around the park at Mersey Vale School as well as at church, in our homes and even posted everyone a hug! Many thanks to all those who have been involved in both of these things.

During this last year I have met regularly with the team from Heaton Moor United Church: Raj, JoAnne (community worker), Sharon (administrator), Jonnie (trainee ordinand). We are working together on such things as the Food Pantry, Heart Art, and our Nativity Trail. It's been a positive to share in work in The Heaton and we will continue to do things together in the future.

We are looking into how we can support those regularly who came to Holiday at Home. We are hoping to work with Salford's 'Love of Food'. Look out for details in the coming weeks.

Pastoral support is always available should you wish to chat or pray. I very much enjoy talking to you on the telephone or texts and hopefully we can meet in person very soon.

I continue to hold you all in my thoughts and prayers. May you know the love of God at this time.

Tracy Brennan Development worker