

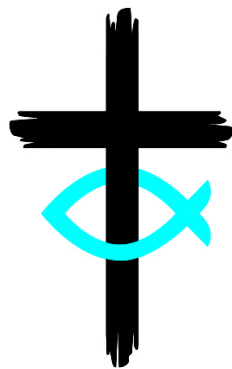
**ALSAGER UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH**

Brookhouse Road

Alsager

ST7 2PA

AURC NEWS
SEPT – NOV 2018



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

MINISTER'S LETTER:

Dear Friends,

I am writing this at the beginning of August; the height of summer is upon us and most of the holiday season still stretches before us. One of the great things about summer is the long sun-filled days and we have had more than our fair share of those this year.

My favourite time of day has always been the early morning. I will always remember getting up at half-past four as a farm apprentice and going out to bring the cows in for milking. Sometimes they could be half a mile or more away and in the winter that could be a fresh and invigorating walk. At this time of year, though, the walk could be wonderful. The sun rising, the first few weak rays of light falling on the ground making the dew sparkle like diamonds. There would sometimes be a nip in the air, but as the sun rose there was the promise of the warmth to come.

But what I remember most, and what I treasured most at the time, was the stillness of the dawn. It was never silent; there were birds chirping, the occasional cow lowing and dogs barking, but there was stillness. It was invariably quiet, calm, fresh, a perfect time for being still and listening.

I no longer have to get up at half-past four in the morning to call the cows in for milking and sometimes, just sometimes, I envy those who do. But

still the early morning for me is a time to stop, a time to breathe. For me, it is not a time to reflect on what happened yesterday, nor a time to think about the day to come. It is simply a time to be, a time to listen in the stillness for the ever-present voice of God.

It is at such moments of stillness that I often feel most alive and it is then that the words of Psalm 58 come to mind:

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn and your healing shall spring up quickly (v8).

However busy life gets, however pressured, however important it seems for us to get on to do the next thing; it can be more important to find a time to simply be, be still, be breathing, be listening to that still small voice. Enjoy these long days of summer; they are filled with God's blessing and promise.

Your friend and minister
Murray

DAILY DEVOTIONS FROM THE URC

Every morning the United Reformed Church sends out a Daily Devotion consisting of a reading, short reflection and prayer to around 2,000 people. The reflections are written by a range of people from different places and perspectives - mainly from the URC. If you'd like to read old Devotions or sign up to receive them each morning please go to devotions.urc.org.uk

DEVOTIONS:

A 'VEGETABLE GARDEN' FOR HARVEST:

1. Plant 5 rows of peas:

PREPAREDNESS

PROMPTNESS

PERSEVERANCE

POLITENESS

PRAYER

2. Plant 3 rows of squash:

SQUASH: GOSSIP

CRITICISM

INDIFFERENCE

3. Plant 5 rows of lettuce:

LET US: BE FAITHFUL

BE UNSELFISH

BE LOYAL

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

BE TRUTHFUL

4. Plant 4 rows of turnips:

TURN UP: FOR CHURCH

WITH A SMILE

WITH A NEW IDEA

WITH REAL DETERMINATION

Lord, before ever you made us, you loved us. Nor has your love ever slackened, nor ever shall. In love all your works have begun, and in love they continue. In this love our life is everlasting, and in this love we shall see you and be glad forever. Amen.

(Julian of Norwich (1342-1416))

COULD YOU JUST LISTEN?

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving me advice, you have not done what I asked. When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings. When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problem, you have failed me - strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I ask is that you listen, not talk or do, just hear me. Advice is cheap.

When you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself, you contribute to my fear and inadequacy; but when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel no matter how irrational, then I can stop trying to convince you and can get down to the business of understanding it.

Irrational feelings make sense when we understand what's behind them. And when that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice. Perhaps that's why prayer is so important for some people - God listens and stays with us but doesn't give advice all the time or try to fix things. God listens and gives us the power to work things through for ourselves, but I need you to be with me too.

So please, just listen. If you want to talk, wait a few minutes for your turn, and I'll listen to you.

Anonymous

BOOK REVIEW: A time To Kill by John Grisham.

Clanton Mississippi, early 1980s, a young black girl is attacked and raped by two white men. The girl's father, Carl Lee Hailey, takes matters into his own hands and in a premeditated attack, guns down the attackers.

Jake Brigance is the lawyer tasked with defending Carl Lee. Starting with complete confidence of getting an acquittal due to the circumstances, things become complicated when the Ku Klux Klan turn up in Clanton. Unhappy with the murder of two white men by a black man, they begin a series of intimidation techniques to turn the tide of public opinion against Carl Lee, with the hope of seeing him sent to the electric chair.

I don't think I've read a book which excited and challenged me in equal measures as much as this one did. If you're looking for an exciting page-turner with twists and turns throughout and suspense right to the end, this is a great choice. But it's not exactly an easy ride. The gruesome opening chapter aside this book continues to challenge throughout.

There's the constant undertone of racial tension, and the belief that if a white man shot two black men for attacking his daughter there wouldn't even be a trial. There's the recurring theme of corruption in the legal system with an ambitious prosecutor putting his own political advancements ahead of justice. Throw in the involvement of the Klan causing riots in the town, making attempts on the lawyer's life and intimidating jurors and judges alike and you really are left wondering how justice could ever prevail.

And that's before you ask yourself the big question, the question that just won't go away throughout the whole book. Are the actions of Carl Lee Hailey justifiable? In the wake of a life changing and brutal attack on his daughter can he be blamed for doing what he did, especially as a black man with very little faith in the justice system? But can premeditated murder ever be acceptable? If an eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind, in 1980s Mississippi, where can a Carl Lee Hailey look to for justice?

A fantastic book by the greatest thriller writer in a generation

Thanks to Dave Keeling.

IT'S OFFICIAL - SINGING MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER:

A number of recent surveys and reports have underlined what we all know. Singing makes us feel better.

Yes there are lots of scientific reasons for this, most of which are entirely beyond me.

The fact is that the act of singing, the enjoyment of familiar and unfamiliar songs, the engagement with others, all point towards something which is highly enjoyable.

Singing groups abound. We have several choirs in Alsager. And of course at the URC we have our own soup and sing.

We started in October 2015, so in the autumn we will celebrate our third anniversary.

In the beginning we were a relatively small number which grew to a regular 12. To be honest we

were a happy and cozy group enjoying fellowship around food and music.

More recently our numbers have grown significantly with 24 people on our books now.

I overheard someone say 'the singing group has changed' and it certainly has.

I believe that the essential fellowship, fun and music is retained but we reach out more now into the folk of Alsager and we have many faces who are new to church. This has to be a good thing.

We do not pretend to be anything special but actually much of the time do produce a very special sound.

We do not purport to be performers but actually in coming weeks we will, by invitation share in two services.

We certainly do not try to take ourselves too seriously.

The lynchpins of this group are Lynne and Philip who cater and care for us and keep things going musically on those occasions when I am elsewhere.

It is my privilege to attend the group whenever I can.

Please do join us occasionally or often. We meet at Church on Mondays at 1pm for soup and sing from about 1.30 to 2.15 with tea and cake afterwards.

Test it out for yourself.

See if singing really does make you feel better!

Thanks to Ian White.

"...all that needs to happen for evil to prevail is that good people to do nothing." Lee Child, *The Affair (alt)*

BIBLE EXPLORATION:

Reading and exploring the Bible is an essential element of growing our faith.

In the Statement on the Nature Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church faith we acknowledge that:

'The highest authority for what we believe and do is God's Word in the Bible alive for His people today through the help of the Spirit.'

Many of us read and reflect on the Bible through a rhythm of daily prayer and Bible reading. But don't forget it can also be good to join together and share insights.

As we explore discipleship through a number of 'Holy Habits' that can help us grow as disciples as well as grow disciples I want to encourage and enable everyone to try to explore the Bible a little bit more.

Not everyone is able to make Bible exploration sessions, but to give as many people as possible the opportunity to do so, from August I will lead the same sessions every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at **Alsager at 2.30 pm** and **Congleton at 7.30 pm**.

I will (and I only speak for myself) use the same material at Alsager and Congleton and anyone from either church would be welcome to come to either. If transport is an issue please speak to me.

I will produce a handout for each session and make them freely available to take and use. They could be used by individuals or small groups.

I hope this will be helpful and enable more of us to explore the Bible, our relationship with God and our discipleship as individuals and fellowships as possible.

Thanks to Murray

WORSHIP AT ALSAGER URC:

September

- | | | |
|----|---------|--|
| 2 | 10.30am | Holy Communion
Rev Murray George |
| 9 | 10.30am | Morning Worship
Rev Dr Marcus Griffiths |
| 16 | 10.30am | Harvest Festival Sharon Mayer |
| | 6.30pm | Ecumenical Worship
Rev Murray George |
| 23 | 10.30am | Morning Worship Joseph Pettit |
| 30 | 10.30am | Morning Worship
Rev Murray George |

October

- | | | |
|----|---------|---|
| 7 | 10.30am | Holy Communion
Rev Murray George |
| 14 | 10.30am | Morning Worship
Rev Andrew Lindley |
| 21 | 10.30am | Morning Worship Rev David Spence |
| | 6.30pm | Ecumenical Worship
Rev Murray George |

28 10.30am Morning Worship
Rev Murray George

November

2 7.00pm All Souls Service
Rev Murray George

4 10.30am Church Anniversary Communion
Rev Bill Farquhar

11 10.30am Remembrance Day Worship
Bronwen Degg

18 10.30am Commitment for Life Worship
John Griffiths

6.30pm Ecumenical Worship
Rev Murray George

25 10.30am Advent Communion
Rev Murray George

December

2 10.30am Gift Service Rev Les Sanderson

TUESDAY LUNCHTIME WORSHIP:

Sept 4, Oct 2, Nov 6 & Dec 4

Service starts at **12.00noon**, lasts about 35mins and
is followed by lunch at approx 12.40pm

OBITUARY: GRAHAM DAWBER

Graham was born in Bolton in 1934; he was the eldest of three children, brother to Sandra and Keith. He was the only one in his family to go to university which was the start of his long academic career. On leaving university he was employed by Courtaulds Research Laboratories as a Research Assistant.

In 1962 he was appointed to a lecturing post at North Staffordshire College of Technology where he worked until he retired, having been involved in the growth of the College to becoming a University; his own career progressing to a professorship.

Graham's passion for music began when he was eight years old and started to have piano lessons; his parents did not have a piano so all his practice took place at his grandmother's house.

Whilst he was at Grammar School his performance skills developed as he played twice a week for school assemblies, his signature hymn being 'Immortal, invisible God only wise'.

From these beginnings he learned to play the organ at Melbourne Road Methodist Church where the family regularly worshipped.

We moved to Alsager in 1963 and in 1968 Graham met Rev Rosemary Shaw and mentioned that he played the organ; the rest is history so they say!

He has played the organ at this Church for forty-seven years, but always said that he was a pianist who played the organ not an organist who played the piano! Throughout the whole of his life he has had a strong faith and tried to help many people to bridge science and religion.

Graham loved conversing with people about their lives and families. Many of you will know what a storyteller he was and how he enjoyed being involved with the entertainment at Harvest Suppers with his rendering of 'The Lion and Albert'.

Graham will be sadly missed by us all but remembered for his smile, loyal friendship, music, and his enthusiasm for life.

With grateful thanks to Audrey.

JUST A COUPLE OF THOUGHTS:

Three walkers met in a park. A bird began singing in a nearby tree and the first man named its species. But the second man insisted that species didn't live in the area. A bit of a debate ensued. The first man said he had a bird book in his car that would settle the matter. So they made for the car park.

The third man walked towards the tree and lost himself for a moment or two in the beauty of the unknown bird's song.

Which was the wisest: the man who knew, the man who knew better, or the man who took the moment for what it was and enjoyed it – whatever it was?

(Friendship Book 2016, June 30)

“Miss no opportunity of making some small sacrifice; here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest thing right – and doing it all for love.”

(From St Thérèse of Lisieux ex Friendship Book 2016, September 14)

ANSWERS TO P.M.'s & PRESIDENTS:

- 1 MARGARET THATCHER
- 2 GEORGE W BUSH
- 3 WINSTON CHURCHILL
- 4 FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT
- 5 LYNDON B JOHNSON
- 6 ANTHONY EDEN
- 7 GORDON BROWN
- 8 BENJAMIN DISRAELI
- 9 BARAK HUSSEIN OBAMA
- 10 ROBERT WALPOLE
- 11 RONALD REAGAN
- 12 STANLEY BALDWIN
- 13 SIR ALEC DOUGLAS-HOME
- 14 WILLIAM GLADSTONE
- 15 GEORGE WASHINGTON
- 16 WILLIAM CLINTON
- 17 HAROLD MACMILLAN
- 18 HARRY S TRUMAN
- 19 SIR ROBERT PEEL
- 20 TED HEATH
- 21 JIMMY CARTER
- 22 DAVID LLOYD GEORGE
- 23 DWIGHT D EISENHOWER
- 24 JAMES CALLAGHAN
- 25 ABRAHAM LINCOLN
- 26 WOODROW WILSON
- 27 WILLIAM PITT THE YOUNGER
- 28 TONY BLAIR
- 29 HAROLD WILSON
- 30 RAMSAY MACDONALD

MORE ANAGRAMS (ANSWERS NEXT TIME):

COUNTRIES:

- 1 ULTRA ASIA
- 2 BIG MULE
- 3 COLD ANTS
- 4 NEAR GYM
- 5 NICE LAD
- 6 SLENDER THAN
- 7 ANY ROW
- 8 A SNIP
- 9 NEAR GIANT
- 10 LIZARDS WENT

RIVERS:

- 1 TRUE SHAPE
- 2 POLO IMP
- 3 IS GRIT
- 4 LINE
- 5 GET ZANY
- 6 TRIBE
- 7 HAS MET
- 8 A UBEND
- 9 SUMO IRIS
- 10 DRAGON IRE

“God made me. God loves me. God keeps me.”
(Mantra used to help cope with a long-term illness).
May those words bring light to your darkness, and
hope to your journey. (From Julian of Norwich ex
Friendship Book 2016, April 21)



Weather



ZUDHCSNOWYGZSDBRRB
 FOGGYKENGUGLRLTTY
 NFROSTTTGYWYUEOM
 RWEOHYHRLELIONENTH
 LSYOKESKROTWRISZAU
 WWSIZZLINGHZNRKWGR
 ODKOGKTTWUEDASYHRR
 EOYSWOYCAEWEDDOTNI
 TWTNEEIWMWOOSIWC
 SNCOOLDODIHRDTWA
 CPSRRATHUNDERWLRAN
 NODMYWYLUSSTDEGPRE
 AULIGHTNINGLWTALMG
 LRLHOTCOLDHAILHGI
 NNBLIZZARDHCCLOUDY
 YOZONDFREEZINGDCBW
 GUTOOHWINDYNTZEOIL
 YRAINYICGONRDKWLT A

blizzard	dew	frost	lightning	thunder
blue sky	downpour	grey sky	rainy	tornado
cloudy	dry	hail	sizzling	warm
cold	foggy	hot	snowy	wet
cool	freezing	hurricane	storm	windy



REGULAR ACTIVITIES:

Mondays:

SOUP/SALAD & SING: RESTARTS SEPT 3:

From 1.00pm (weekly in Church):

A light lunch followed by a good sing, hopefully something for everyone, ending with tea and cake with good fellowship. You don't need to be a Pavarotti or a Katherine Jenkins, it's all about singing, food and fellowship.

**Contacts: Ian (01270 877243)/Lynne Eardley
01270 877861 (for catering purposes)**

Wednesdays:

BIBLE EXPLORATION:

From 2.30-3.30pm (2nd Wednesday in the Hall)

Next meetings:

Sept 12 and 26

Oct 10 and 24

Nov 14 and 28

**Contacts: Rev Murray (01260 273873)/Rev John
(01782 771288)**

Thursdays:

THURSDAY AFTERNOON FELLOWSHIP:

TAF meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 2.30pm usually in the church hall unless otherwise advertised.

On July 12 our meetings were brought to a close, before the summer recess, with a lovely Afternoon Tea Party prepared by Lynne and Ria.

A sales table did a brisk trade and 8 people took home raffle prizes.

Meetings will recommence on **Thursday Sept 13** at **2.30pm** when we will celebrate ***Harvest***. A new programme of speakers and events will be issued on the day.

A warm welcome awaits everyone who comes along to share in a short time of devotion and fellowship.

Contacts: Philip/Lynne Eardley 01270 877861.

Fridays:

CARRY ON DANCING!

From 10.00am weekly in the hall.

Gentle exercises to well-known tunes and a few dance steps we all thought we'd forgotten!

It only costs £2 per session and this includes refreshments.

A qualified teacher leads the sessions and it really is good fun.

Contact: Lynne Eardley 01270 877861/Valerie 07817 172052

Saturdays:

COFFEE and CHAT

From 10.00am-12.00noon

On the first Saturday of every month the church hall is always open for refreshments, with a sales table, books and an array of handmade cards, offering something different each time.

Forthcoming hosts:

Sept 1	Bob and Ria Harrison
Oct 6	Doreen Baker and Barbara Harkness
Nov 3	Lynne Eardley and Jacquie McCullough
Dec 1	Tom Beamon and Eileen Wallace

If you are unable to fulfil your duty, Tom Beamon has offered to help, so please approach Tom directly on 01270 883823. We are always on the lookout for volunteers so speak to Philip if you would like to help. Thank you all for your support.

Contact: Philip Eardley 01270 877861

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Sat Sept 15 Harvest Supper
Tues Oct 9 Church Meeting 7.15pm
Sat Oct 13 "Phantom of the Opera" Film
Afternoon
Sat Nov 17 Funky Choir.com Concert
More details in the weekly notices nearer the events.

BIRTHDAYS

September

2 Doug Bennett
5 Alan Abraham
10 Melanie Edwards
11 Olive Lear
14 David Riley
Gillian Bowler

October

2 Faye Kerry
4 Dorothy Bragg
7 Irene Gaunt
11 Jenny Keeling
12 Alex Keeling

November

1 Vanessa Walker
3 Chris Winskill
21 Jacquie McCullough
27 Audrey Dawber
30 Marie Riley

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU ALL

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: SUN OCTOBER 28