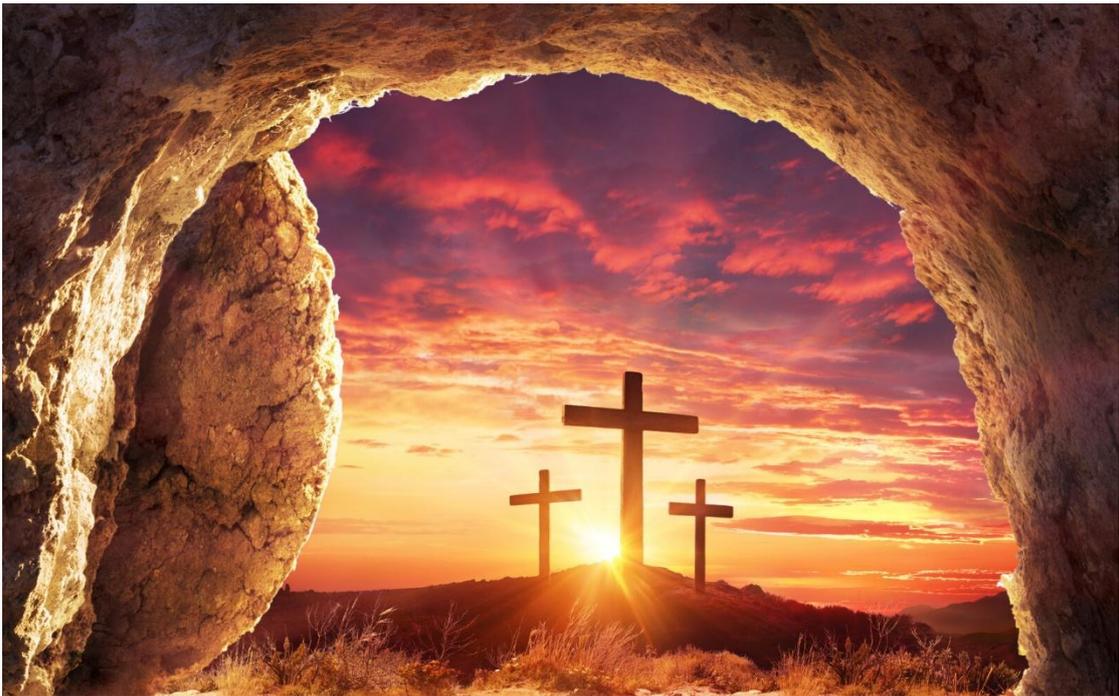


KEYSTONE

United Didsbury Methodist Church

Minister: Rev. Catharine Hughes



Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.
The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;
and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.
Do you believe this?" John 11: 25-2

APRIL 2025

Minister's letter

The Manse
64 Brantingham Road
Manchester M21 0TD

Dear friends,

As Eco-Lent draws to a close we journey away from the wilderness and towards the garden.

If you saw my manse garden this is what you would be wishing for: that it would turn away from being a wilderness and draw closer to being a proper garden. Currently there is some grass lawn, though a large swathe of it gets over-run by Ground Elder, dandelions and a particular resistant length of bramble. This month, though, I expect the far end to look glorious as the bluebells-that-aren't-bluebells (I forget their name, but they are prolific weed-bulbs) and forget-me-not take over the back of the garden. From the kitchen window it looks stunning: as you get closer you notice how out of control the flowers are.

Our other spring invasion comes from the sprouting sycamore trees. Alongside the manse is a row of 7-8 mature sycamores that delight in sending helicopters down in season... and then we reap the benefits of hundreds of small plants popping up all over the place. Generally, I love trees: they provide the oxygen that gives us life, let alone being homes to birds and bugs. However, these sycamores have roots that are disturbing the pathway, branches that have damaged the roof, fallen leaves that block the guttering and shade that covers the garden.

Lent draws us from the wilderness where Jesus stayed for forty days and nights, and journeys with Jesus to the events of Holy Week and the cross. We journey from a place that is barren and hard to live with, to the ultimate point of sacrifice where Jesus gave his life for us.

And the night before the crucifixion we find Jesus in a garden: the Garden of Gethsemane. Here he is with his three closest disciples, pleading with God. 'If possible, take this cup away from me. Yet not my will, but yours.' [Matthew 26.39] The disciples, though, are asleep. (It has been a long day, they have eaten well at the Passover meal, they are exhausted...) In this Garden the shadow of death falls over Jesus. It is here that he is betrayed by Judas' kiss, arrested and taken away from his mock trial. The disciples? They 'deserted him and fled' [Matthew 26.56].

We are not to rush past the garden in shadow, where there is sorrow and anguish, despair and betrayal. In the shadows of our lives, we recognise that we pass through emotions that Jesus felt too. It can be hard and lonely, and feel hopeless and helpless.

Our journey through Eco-Lent may, at times, have made us feel like there is no hope for our planet: that the climate crisis is unstoppable and will destroy us all. But our Eco challenges show us that little things we do can, collectively, make a big difference. My sycamore trees may cast a long shadow, but the plants in the garden can still find space to grow towards the light. All our actions can help restore a healthy balance to God's creation.

By Easter Day the garden has changed, and Mary Magdalene meets the Gardener. In Him we find life, hope, and the promises of resurrection.

Catharine

There in the garden of tears my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn, 'Yet not my will but yours,' he said.

This is our God, the Servant King...

Singing the Faith no.272

Preachers: -

6th April Anne Wilde

13th April Promilla Jabeen

17th April 2.00pm *Maundy Thursday Communion* with Rev. Catharine

18th April 10.30am *Good Friday service* at St. Nicholas Church, Kingsway, Burnage.

20th April 08.45am Rev. Catharine - *Holy Communion followed by an Easter Breakfast*
10.45am Chris Davis

27th April Rev. Mandy Boon



Readings

6th April Isaiah 43: 16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3: 4b-p14; John 12: 1-8



Palm Sunday - 13th April Luke 19: 28-40; Psalm 118; 1-2;
Isaiah 50 4-9a; Psalm 31: 9-16



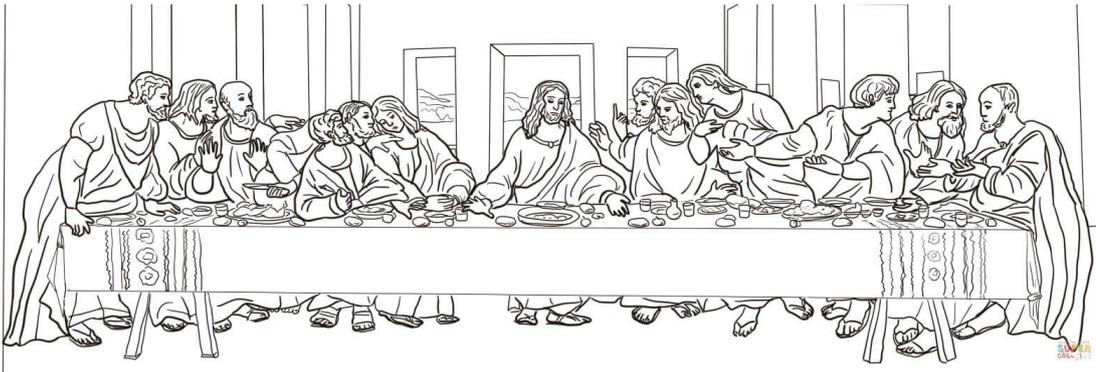
Maundy Thursday - 17th April
Exodus 12: 1-4 (5-10); Psalm 116: 1-2, 12-19; Corinthians 11:23-26



18th April Isaiah 52: 13-53; Hebrews 10: 16-25; John 18:1-19

From Withington: -

Many years ago, when David Copley was Superintendent and our Minister, we held a service on the evening of Maundy Thursday which included a meal based on the special food prepared at the beginning of the Jewish Passover festival. On our table was unleavened bread, (a reminder of the how quickly the Jews had to leave Egypt), bitter herbs (horseradish - evoking the bitterness of slavery). vegetables dipped in salt water (recalling the tears shed in oppression), roast lamb and an egg. We also had a paste made from apples, nuts, cinnamon and raisins (called Charoset, representing the cement and bricks used by the slaves in Egypt). We shared this meal as a reminder of Christ's Last Supper, finishing with Holy Communion, and it proved a very moving and meaningful occasion.



We are going to revisit this special service and meal with Caroline at 7.30pm on 17th April, Maundy Thursday.

As we are enjoying shared worship with Levenshulme and have twice been invited to Didsbury for their Maundy Thursday meal, we would like to invite both churches to our evening. I see on the plan that United Didsbury are holding a Maundy Thursday Communion Service at 2.00pm, but there appears to be no service at Levenshulme.

Would you like to consider our invitation? Should you be interested in joining us we would need to have an idea of numbers to assist with our catering.

Looking forward to hearing from you

very best wishes

Heather

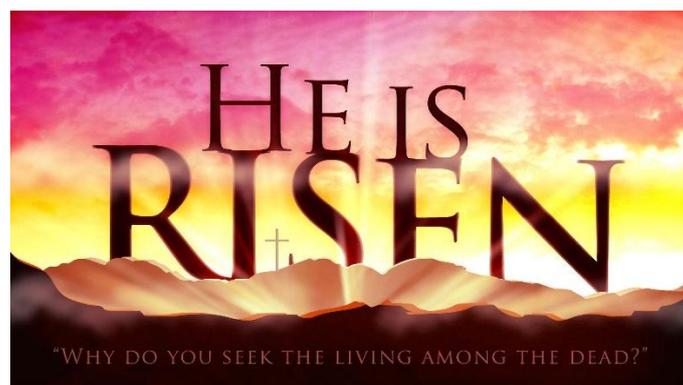
Contact: - heatherjsteward@yahoo.co.uk



20th April Acts 19_ 34-43; Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24; Corinthians 15: 19-28

But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him
See, I have told you.”

Matthew 28: 5-7





Rev. Catharine Rev. Caroline Paul and the family of Angela. The family of Ann.
The family of Jinka Margaret J Phil Dave & Mary Tania Betty
Cynthia Tracy Sue F Ben & Jonathon Margaret W Merv
Sandra W Pat Heather T Paul & Paula Beryl G Sheila P Joyce
Eugenia & Oscar Our church family Those in hospital The NHS
Those in our prayer book and on our prayer tree. Worn torn countries
Foodbanks Moston Baby Basket Those without a bed and on the poverty line
The long anxious and depressed

We thank you God for answered prayer and continue to pray for all those who need His love and hold them in our hearts. Amen



*If you'd like anyone on our prayer wall in Keystone,
please speak to me or email rosieblayds@gmail.com*

**Please place a name for someone you wish continual prayer
for on the prayer tree at the back of church**

Your church needs you!

There are many jobs that need doing in and around the church, both in terms of physical work to maintain the building and to support the needs of the congregation. Practical buildings maintenance, communion stewards, cleaning, advertising, prayer warriors, website, pastoral visitors, tea/coffee duties, fellowship group leaders, administration, stewards... all - and many more - are needed to make the church run smoothly. Many jobs are done behind the scenes.

Firstly, thank you to everyone who contributes to the existing work of the church. Your efforts are noted and valued, even if we don't say thank you often or loudly enough.

Secondly, please consider whether you can offer to help. Do you have a skill in administration? Maybe you could help with the church's GDPR requirements. Would you be able to assist with the preparations for Communion? We would welcome more communion stewards. Are you visually creative and artistic? Perhaps you could help with sprucing up the internal noticeboards. Of particular urgency is the need for new stewards to be appointed at the next AGM (June 2025). Do speak to one of the current stewards or to Rev Catharine to get an idea of what that role entails.

Take the plunge and allow God to call you into something new!



The Circuit Service continues; you're warmly welcomed to join on Sunday evenings 6.30pm on Zoom - the room opens from 6.00pm for a chat and fellowship with friends.

LADIES
CIRCLE

All ladies are welcome to join us in Room 3 every other Thursday to meet in love and friendship. **Start 2.00pm** (finish 3.30pm after tea/coffee and biscuits/cakes). The door is open from 1.40pm - do pop along if you can, you'll be made very welcome. *Rosie x*

3rd April AGM followed by a fun Quiz with Rosie

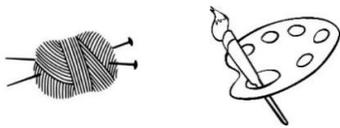
1st May We return for our Summer Session



Circuit Film Club will meet on **Thursday 24th April at 7.00pm** - the film to watch in preparation for discussion is 'Groundhog Day' available from eBay and, more expensively, on Amazon. If you'd like to come along, please contact me at lizstuartlp@aol.com – I'll send you the Zoom code. Liz



A drink, fellowship & prayer with friends at Caramello, Didsbury. Open to all. Meeting for an hour on **9th April**, a break for Easter and **back on 30th April 10.00am** for an hour.



ART SPACE - Have you got a craft project on the go or do you want to try a new one? Ever thought of learning to draw and paint? On **Wednesday mornings between 10.00 and 12.00** - a chance to do something creative in the company of others. Whether it's painting, embroidery, knitting, card making or anything else that you do, just bring your kit with you and enjoy the peace and quiet. This is not tutor led, just an opportunity to work on those unfinished projects and develop skills with friends. Why not come along and give it a go? Please ring the bell three times - Any questions, please see Patsy. *Note: Art Space is not meeting on 2nd April.*

THE FELLOWSHIP GROUP will next meet at 2.00pm on Monday 28th April in Room 1 and will then continue to meet on a fortnightly basis, with occasional adjustments for bank holidays. "For further details, please see Nick or Patsy."

Badminton Club in the hall on Tuesdays from 8.00pm - all welcome to pop along. For further details, email: nicholaspalfreyman@yours.com



Happy Birthday to all born in the month of April xxx

Commentary on the second commandment

On “Idolatry Street” artificial Intelligence is the “new kid on the block”.

This is the new idol to whom we now pay homage. To mix a metaphor, this is the new knight in shining armour who will come to the rescue of the healthcare system. According to one optimistic forecast “self-triage, augmented reality surgery and robot helpers are some of the innovations we would do well to replicate”(Rachel Sylvester: The AI revolution can put patients at the centre of NHS).

The present reality is more sobering:- “Nursing degree applications fall for fourth year”(Maisie Lillywhite: BBC News 13th March 2025). The reason is that “many students cannot afford to study due to additional pressures such as working part time to support themselves”. If anything, these financial pressures will be compounded by the prospect of an increase in university tuition fees now that universities have reduced their intake of international students whose higher tuition fees have hitherto been subsidising the Higher Education system. The loss of that subsidy has forced Cardiff University to shut down its school of nursing, thereby compounding the shortfall in nurse training. No amount of artificial intelligence can ever be a substitute for the human interaction involved in nursing care, and the empathy that can generate a therapeutic benefit in its own right.

I fear that, in our preoccupation with the false promises that are supposed to be an answer to the prayers that we have submitted to the false god of artificial intelligence we have been blindsided to the immediate and present reality of the healthcare crisis. Oscar

So, we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members , one of another” (Roman 12:5).

A prescient axiomatic saying of great topical import.

Stated differently, it is a celebration of our interdependence. Its counterpart , in my own language, Xhosa, reads as follows:-

“Izandla ziyahlambana” which translates(less pithily) to “Neither the left hand nor the right hand can wash itself singlehandedly”

Accordingly, instead of celebrating self-sufficiency, as in the declaration that every single shred of Weetabix is derived from “Homegrown wheat from British farms”, we should proclaim, from the rooftops, that the ubiquitous Samsung mobile telephone is a product of South Korea, and that the motor car which comes off the production line is made up of a variety of components that have crisscrossed several international boundaries.

And so, perhaps, with the individual employees who make up the composition of the NHS and the care home sector and, indeed, the entire spectrum of the national workforce. Oscar

thank
you

for your love and concern over the past few weeks while I have been unwell and had visits to hospital. I am so very grateful for love and am now on the mend. Rosie xxx



You are encouraged to 'like' our page. It would be good to increase our social media presence! **United Didsbury Methodist Church**



CHELWOOD FOODBANK As always, thanks for your donations of food and money, There's always something in the box, so thanks again - Rosie x

Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Luke 21: 1-4



MOSTON BABY BASKET

Angela did an amazing job for the Baby Basket and was always grateful for your kind donations. At UDMC we've supported this project for some time now. The Team is always so grateful for anything that you can donate, so please continue to give, thank you. x

EASTER QUIZ

1. On what day of the week do we celebrate Easter?
2. What is the traditional flower of Easter?
3. Which country produced the world's largest Easter egg?
4. In which ocean is Easter Island?
5. What name is given to the Sunday before Easter?
6. How many pieces of silver did Judas trade the life of Jesus for?
7. At the Last Supper, which food item did Jesus liken his body to?
8. Which fruit is traditionally seen in a hot cross bun?
9. What is Easter a symbol of?
10. What colour were the first Easter eggs dyed?
11. When it comes to eating a chocolate bunny, what do 76% of people eat first?
12. When was the UK's first Easter egg produced? 1853 1873 or 1895

Enjoy Rosie x

Answers on page 13



Have a Happy and Blessed Easter

Cynthia's chit-chat

World Day of Prayer: - Although I was unable to attend this service this year (at the Baptist Church), I was delighted to receive a visit from Laura Pasterner (the co-ordinator for our area). She brought me the service sheet, a flower and other items from the service. I was so pleased to see her and she is going to visit me again.



St. Patrick's Day - Because Steve's parents came from Ireland, we celebrate this day. Going into Manchester to the Irish Market in Albert Square and then into the pop-up restaurant 'The Irish Pantry' in the Town hall where traditional food was served. In later years we went to 'The Cheshire Line Tavern' where Irish music was performed by George Galway and his band brother of James Galway, the famous flautist) Traditional food was served – fond memories. I must also tell you that I recently found, whilst sorting out, a bottle of Holy Water, which we brought back after a visit to Ireland in 2000). The Holy Shrine at Knocke Church had continual masses and you could fill bottles with the Holy Water, so mine is 25 years old!

TV Memories: - Biggin Hall (Derbyshire) was on the TV show, Four in a Bed recently. A few years ago, through Didsbury Civic Society, I had rediscovered a teacher from my days at Chorlton Park Junior School; We kept in touch by letter, but sadly I never got to see her as she lived in Derbyshire. About 5 years ago there was to be a surprise party for her 100th birthday to which Steve and I were invited. Sadly, she died in the January before her birthday in the April. However, the celebration went ahead; it was at Biggin Hall, a beautiful Hotel set in the Derbyshire countryside.

More TV Memories: - Another hotel featured recently was The Manor House Inn, Haltwhistle, Northumberland. This I know well as I stayed at the Inn after my husband had died and before I met Steve. It was lovely to see Haltwhistle again, and as many of you know, this is and always will be one of my favourite counties.



My Physio – I recently achieved my second goal and that is to get on the local bus (at Broadoak Lane) using my rollator with my two physios guiding me. I was so thrilled. We are going for a longer ride next time, so gradually I can use the bus by myself.

Bye for now and God Bless.
Easter Blessings to everyone.
Love Cynthia x

STAY STRONG

When life gives you a hundred reasons
to break down and cry, show life that
you have a million reasons to smile and laugh.

Answers:

1. Sunday
2. Lily
3. Chile
4. Pacific
5. Palm Sunday
6. 40
7. Bread
8. Raisins
9. New life and re-birth
10. Red
11. Ears
12. 1873 in Bristol



Rev. Catharine, Liz, Patsy, Cynthia, Oscar, Sandra & Tony & Rosie x

Articles for the December/January edition by **27th April**. Pass to me at church or email rosieblayds@gmail.com (07758 011362), 13 Moor Park Road, E. Didsbury, M20 5PF.

Much love as always.

Rosie xxx

LAST THOUGHT

Lord, you have taught us in your word that
there is a time to speak and a time to keep silence.

As we thank you for the power of speech,
we pray for the grace of silence.

Make us as ready to listen as we are to talk,
ready to listen to your voice in
the quietness of our hearts and ready to listen to
other people who need a sympathetic ear.

Show us when to open our mouths and when to hold our peace,
that we may glorify you both in speech and in silence.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A prayer by Frank Colquhoun, taken from *The Lion Prayer Collection*.



Rev Catharine Hughes

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