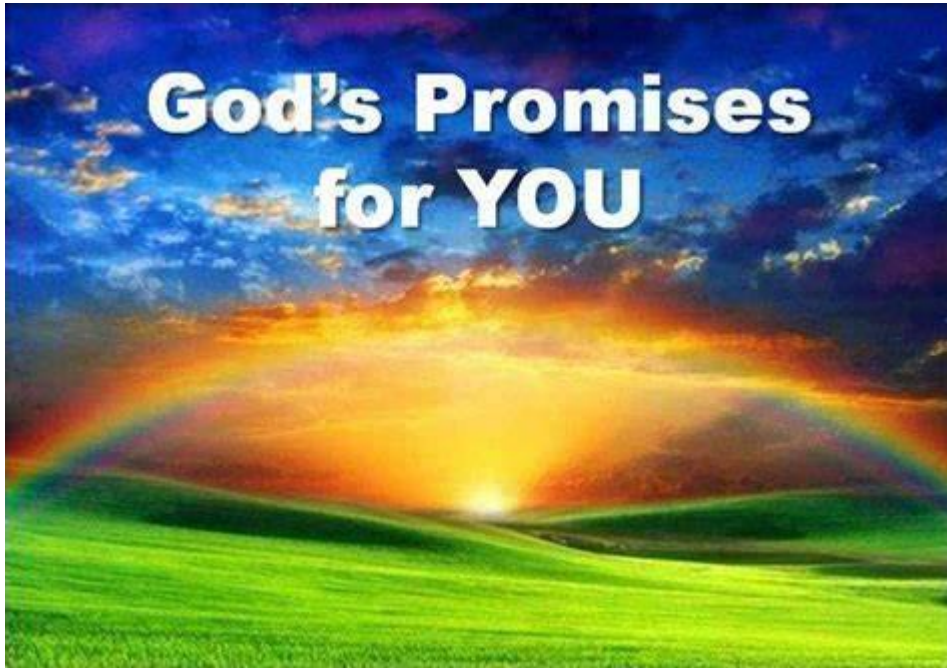


KEYSTONE

United Didsbury Methodist Church
Minister: Rev. Catharine Hughes



Salvation. Unchanging Love. Assurance of His Faithfulness.
Comfort. Guidance. Provision. Protection. Renewal.
Eternal Life and much more.

MARCH 2025

Minister's letter

The Manse
64 Brantingham Road
Manchester M21 0TD

Dear friends,

I occasionally catch a programme on Radio 4 called 'Young Again'. The premise is that the host, Kirsty Young, asks well-known personalities, 'What would you like to tell your younger self?' It brings up a mixture of regrets for actions taken and longing for knowledge known at an earlier point. I wonder what you would like to tell your younger self?

We all regret things we've done: words we've spoken without thinking of others' feelings, or foolish actions that have landed us in trouble. Unfortunately, it is part of our human nature, for 'all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God' (Romans 3.23). We all mess up, and keep having to turn back to God for forgiveness, ready to start again. It is the essence of the tradition of Lent (which begins on Ash Wednesday, 5 March): we are to fast (restrain from eating food), and spend the time reflecting on how we have failed God. The call is to repent (say sorry!) and start again.

This year the Manchester Circuit will be taking Lent as a time to consider our response to the environment, with repentance for our individual and collective roles in deepening the climate crisis. As a church and congregation, we will have the opportunity to meet and discuss this, particularly through the Lent Bible Studies across the Didsbury & Burnage Churches Working Together group. There are ecumenical gatherings across the weeks, and we host one on Tuesday afternoons at 2pm. Together we will find ways that we can take steps to make God's world a better place.

In case you are interested, I think I would tell my younger, insecure self that I can do more than I think I can. This applies to our care for God's earth too: even little changes that we make can have a big effect when we do them together. The world's problems, the issue of climate crisis and the repeated injustices we witness may seem overwhelming and unstoppable, but we don't fight it alone. Our Lenten journey with Jesus to the cross brings forgiveness and, ultimately, life.

Catharine



“Your Church” Service - Sunday 2nd of March

Our service this coming Sunday will be led by Abi Parr in her capacity as Senior Development, Manager of TCC (Transforming Churches & Communities). Many of you will know Abi as a local preacher within our circuit. Rev Catharine will also be there but solely in a supportive capacity.

As part of our worship everyone will be invited to complete a confidential questionnaire about our church and the community in which it sits. This forms a key part of the Church Review Report that TCC are producing for us. Those who are unable to attend on Sunday will still be invited to complete the questionnaire. If you do not receive it by Saturday 8 March, please contact your pastoral visitor or one of the church stewards. There is a deadline for completion of Sunday 16 March.

In addition, there is a community questionnaire that all the users of the building will be invited to complete. We will put posters up around the building highlighting this, with a unique QR code that takes people directly to the questions. Please can you consider making yourself available to come down to church while it is being used by our wider community and encourage the completion of these forms? A personal touch is always more effective, and the more data we have the better picture we will get for our mission plan.

Further details about how the work TCC are doing fits with our mission plan is included in February’s Keystone. More details about TCC are in the attached document.

This is your opportunity to make your voice heard: please use it!



Who are we?

Transforming Churches and Communities are a Methodist rooted, yet independent charity who provide consultancy services to charities and churches. We are based in Manchester but work nationwide.

We come alongside churches, Circuits, and Districts going through period of change and discernment, providing them with clear understandings of their missional context, listening to what each individual member and adherent thinks about their church and mission and then supporting the church in realising their visions, through a review of the practical elements of church, such as governance, property and finance.

Our key goal is to support you in achieving your mission.

We are excited to be working with your church to help you discern the way to maximise your missional potential and gain a clear understanding of the challenges but also the opportunities you have. The aim of this work is to provide a strong, evidence-based footing to your development as a church.

How will this work?

We have first asked for a lot of information from your church, so that when we talk about mission we can also look at what is realistic. We have looked at paperwork pertaining to governance, property and finance, to help us understand the position of your church, but huge part of our work is surveying the views of each individual attendee at a special *Your Church* Sunday worship service, led by a member of the TCC team.

The team members who lead the services are also local preachers, or local preachers in training, and work hard to integrate this exercise with worship, so you won't be "losing" a Sunday. Instead, please see this as working together to strengthen and further the kingdom of God in Manchester – what could be a greater act of worship than that!

The information we collect will then be anonymised and collated, so that your individual church leadership, and circuit leadership can understand how you feel about your church, your Circuit, and future mission.

We will ask a lot of questions during this process, but this isn't an interrogation – rather we are looking to gain a clear picture of where your church is now, and how you might work together in the future.

We will then come back to see you again in approximately a months' time to present the report and discuss potential next steps.

If you would like to learn more about us, and what we do, then please take a look at our website:

<https://churchandcommunity.org.uk/>

Here you can find case studies, a full list of our services, along with advice on funding your projects.

If you have any questions at all about the process, please feel free to reach out to myself, at the email address below.

We look forward to seeing you!

Abi Parr

Senior Development Manager at TCC

Contact: abigail.parr@churchandcommunity.org.uk

Preachers: -

2nd March Rev. Catharine Hughes – *TCC with Abi Parr*

9th March Rev. Mandy Boon – *Holy Communion*

16th March Local arrangement – *Your stewards*

23rd March Richard Baker

30th March Rev. Ade Kila



Readings

2nd March Exodus 34: 29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3: 12-4:2; Luke 9: 28-36 (37-43a)

Ash Wednesday

5th March Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17; Psalm 51: 1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10;
Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21

First Sunday in Lent

9th March Deuteronomy 26: 1-11; Psalm 91: 1-2, 9-16; Romans 10: 8b-13; Luke 4: 1-13

Second Sunday in Lent

16th March Genesis 15: 1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Luke 13: 31-35

Third Sunday in Lent

23rd March Isaiah 55: 1-9; Psalm 63: 1-8; 1 Corinthians 10: 1-13; Luke 13: 1-9

Fourth Sunday in Lent

30th March Joshua 5: 9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5: 16-21; Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32

Or

Mothering Sunday: Exodus 2: 1-10; Psalm 34: 11-20; Psalm 127: 1-4; 2 Corinthians 1: 3-7

MARCH



Sunday 2nd March Sunday before Lent



Tuesday 4th March National Day of Reflection – This has been set up to remember those who lost their lives since the pandemic began. People are invited to:

- remember and commemorate those who lost their lives since the pandemic began
- reflect on the sacrifices made by many, and on the impact of the pandemic on us all
- pay tribute to the work of health and social care staff, frontline workers and researchers
- appreciate those who volunteered & showed acts of kindness during this unprecedented time



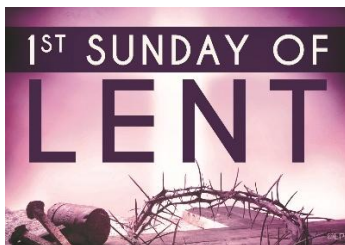
Wednesday 5th March

We initiate the 40-day period of Lent, during which we reflection Jesus' 40-day fast and temptation in the desert. Ash is applied to your forehead in the shape of a cross as a symbol of repentance and mortality.



Friday 7th March World Day of Prayer

Kia Orana! Our sisters in The Cook Islands welcome us and lead us for the Day of Prayer 2025. This group of 15 islands in the South Pacific Ocean has a rich and colourful Māori heritage and a deep connection to nature. Join with us as we pray together and reflect on the theme 'I made you wonderful'. World Day of Prayer is an international.



Sunday 9th March - Lent is a period of 40 days of fasting and prayer leading up to Easter. Lent starts on Ash Wednesday and concludes on Holy Saturday, just before Easter Sunday. The word "Lent" comes from the word "lecten" which is Anglo-Saxon meaning "spring" and refers to the lengthening of days.

Romans 10: 8-13 - *The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart* –that is, the word of faith that we preach, for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. For the Scripture says, *No one who believes in him will be put to shame.* For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all enriching all who call upon him.



Sunday 30th March

Mother's Day or Mothering Sunday, is a day to honour mothers and other mother figures, such as grandmothers, stepmothers and mothers-in-law. Cards and gifts are given or lunch as treat and a thank you. We honour all women on this day.

Eco-Lent: “Small changes, big impact”

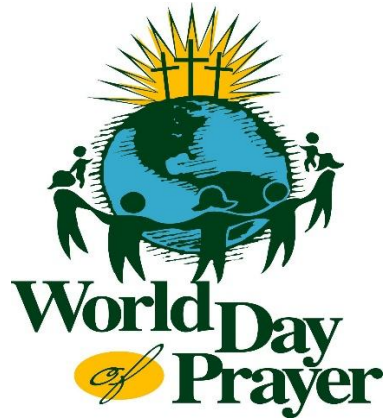
Our Lent bible studies will focus on themes from ‘Eggs & Ashes’, published by the Wild Goose Resource Group (Iona Community). They are:

- Reducing waste and pollution
- Use of energy
- Maintaining and Increasing Biodiversity
- Use of Water
- Shopping thoughtfully

Additionally, the Ash Wednesday reflection is ‘Use of Transport’. Rev Catharine will be leading a simple Ash Wednesday service at 12midday at Levenshulme Methodist Church, following their coffee morning (come to the entrance at the back of the church).

The Sunday evening services on zoom will follow these themes, with guest preachers Richard Baker and Rev Alan Bradley (9 & 23 March respectively). Please contact Rev Dr Caroline Wickens for Zoom ID & password details.





Friday 7th March 2025 – 7.30pm

A service for everyone

THE COOK ISLANDS

Didsbury Baptist Church, Beaver Rd

Manchester M20 6SX

All welcome

Refreshments served afterwards

INFORMED PRAYER PRAYERÉUL ACTION

24-7 365 days a year Prayer movement Ecumenical International Women-led
ww&p.org.uk Registered Charity Number 233242





Rev. Catharine Rev. Caroline Margaret J Angela Phil Dave & Mary
Janet Tania Betty Cynthia Jinka Kat David Tracy Sue F
Ben & Jonathon Margaret W Sandra W Pat Heather T Paul & Paula
Beryl G Sheila P Eugenia and Oscar Joyce Our church family
Those in hospital The NHS Those in our prayer book and 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!



A HUGE thank you for all the lovely cards and best wishes for my 83rd birthday on 3rd February. I can't believe it's three years since I became 80! I still have my lovely mac to keep me on my toes! Margaret J xxx

Postscript: And we pray for Margaret whilst she is in hospital and hold her in our hearts.



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*

6th March Saris with Val
20th March Armchair exercise with Patsy



Circuit Film Club will meet on **Thursday 20th March at 7.00pm** - the film to watch in preparation for discussion is '*Perfect Days*' 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 **5th and 19th March at 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.

THE FELLOWSHIP GROUP Is taking a break over Lent so that people can go to the *Didsbury Churches Together* Lent Bible Studies. The 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



The return of Eggbert...

Watch out - Eggbert's about!

Eggbert will be going on an Eco-journey this Lent. Do follow his exploits on Facebook and Instagram.

[@eggcellent2024](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556435665171)

Rev Catharine and Rachel Humphreys (Circuit Communications Officer) will be pleased to receive any photos you may take of Eggbert (in his woolly hat!) out and about this year. Please send them to Rachel: rhumphreys@manchestermethodists.org.uk or WhatsApp 07835229499



Happy Birthday to all born in the month of March 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 both food items, clothing and money; this is much appreciated, especially in this cold weather. There is always something in the box when I check, so thanks again - Rosie x



MOSTON BABY BASKET

Thank you for your many kind donations to this project that UDMC has supported for some time now. The Baby Basket Team is always so grateful for anything that you can donate Angela x



Artserve Members and non-members are all welcome.

**Venue: Dialstone Lane Methodist Church
Offerton, Stockport, SK2 7LQ**

Theme: Creating Harmony.

Time: The day will begin with coffee at 10am and end at 3.30pm.

An opportunity to explore the theme creatively, through various activities.
Although the day is free registration is required.

Please contact Anne Wilde - annewilde2002@gmail.com

The alliterative endorsement

“Brightest and best”(not the hymn) has an alliterative ring that endorses the authenticity of all that it stands for, and all that it relegates to lower priority. It represents the triumph of intellectual excellence, exemplified by the Manhattan Project and its outcomes such as unleashing the destructive potential of nuclear power in the era of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In the contemporary era artificial intelligence is the exemplar of intellectual excellence, even at the cost of relegating, to a lower priority, human contribution to the workforce.

This is spelt out in the workforce vision of the NHS, where high priority has been given to acquisition of skills in artificial intelligence (NHS England, Workforce, Training, Education: The impact of Artificial Intelligence). By contrast, nothing like the same priority has been given to nurse training, notwithstanding the imminent closure of university-based nurse training departments as a result of the financial crisis which has engulfed the university sector(The Guardian 1st February 2025:Quarter of leading UK universities cutting staff due to budget shortfalls).

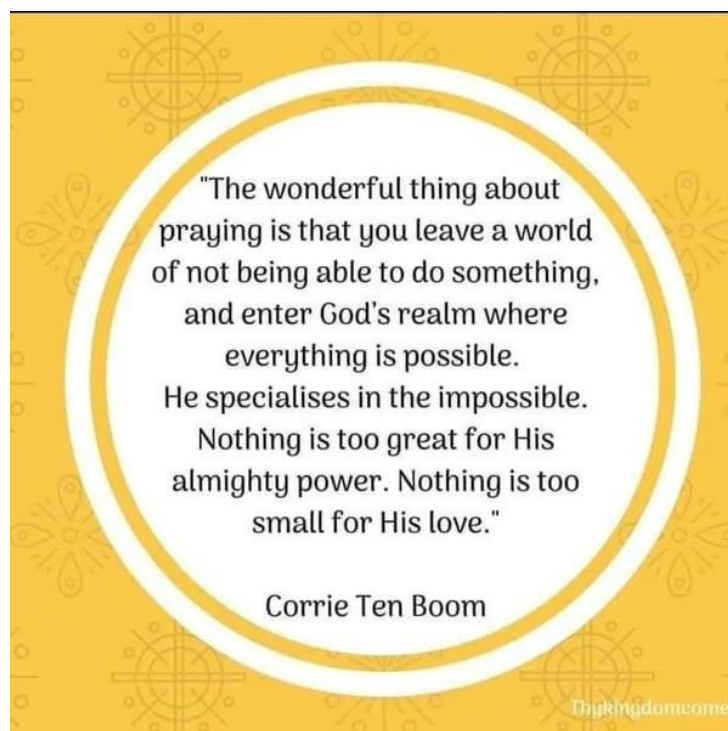
Now is the time when we should caution against prioritisation of one kind of intellectual prowess over another, even if for no other reason than that it is a violation of St Paul’s invocation that “the parts of the body that seem to be(intellectually) weaker are indispensable”(parentheses are mine). (1 Corinthians: Chapter 12: verses 12-27)

PS: According to the Royal College of Nursing “A majority of nurse-lecturers and other higher education nursing staff across UK reported redundancies and recruitment freezes” (Guardian 1st February 2025:Quarterof leading UK Universities cutting staff due to budget shortfalls)).

Oscar



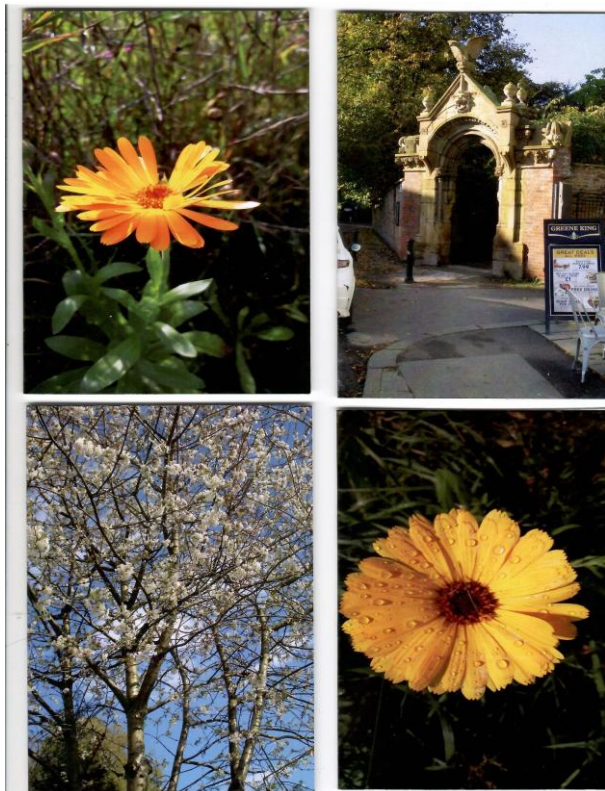
Some of the flower portraits Oscar has collected – thank you x



The Souchay Court Residents Association are staging a fundraising exhibition of greeting cards that I have crafted(see attachment) from photographs of wild flowers at Fog Lane Park , and local places of interest. The event will take place on the 2nd March from 2.30 pm onwards.

We are extending the invitation to all church members. There will be at least 20 different greeting cards(ie: at least 20 different subjects). This means at least 20 different choices (the four examples in this email are just a taster). The greeting cards will cost 90p each.

Best wishes. Oscar



*“Consider how the wildflowers grow. They do not labour or spin.
Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour
was dressed like one of these.” – Luke 12:27*

Cynthia's chit-chat Hello everyone.



Well, the snowdrops and primroses are now blooming so Spring is on its way. I think we all feel better to see these signs.

My mobility- Just before the February issue of Keystone, I was able to achieve my first goal of walking from my flat to our church, using my rollator. I was so thrilled because an earlier physio said "It would be a long time before you achieve that". I just had to tell someone, so I phoned Rosie who was delighted. Last week my physio told me I could walk round my flat using two sticks and also, I had expressed by wish to try and use the bus with my rollator (with the physio's help). Well, she has arranged an extra time slot on the 14th March so I could try this, it would mean that after more practice I could use the bus and get into the village.

St. James & Emmanuel- Nick Bundock, the team Rector is leaving to become Bishop of Glasgow. What an honour; he will be greatly missed. Steve and I knew him from the *Old Parsonage* re-opened and on that day, Nick presented me with a lovely bouquet and said "You are rather like a vicar's wife and do so much behind the scenes"! When Steve first became poorly, Nick would phone me for a chat; this is a lovely lasting memory of Nick's kindness.

TV Memories; I recently watched 'Four in a Bed' Two of the competitors were from the Britannia Inn in Sherbourne, Dorset. You may remember from an earlier chat-chat that my Mum loved in Sherbourne before I was born and it's a place I know well and I had stayed at the Inn after my husband died. Well, the couple won the competition, and I was so delighted that I intend to write to the couple and tell them of my connections.



TV Memories 2-

Gardener's World recently visited Arley Hall and the Welsh Botanic Gardens. Both of these places Steve and I had visited and it was good to see them again on TV. Happy memories!

Vision Weekend- finally, I would like to thank Catharine and all those involved in the Weekend. It was very interesting and gave us lots to think about.

Bye for now and God bless.

Cynthia x

Favourite parables(Matthew 20:1-16)

The parable of the vineyard workers might well be the parable that policy makers should adopt as guiding principle. In essence, the “take home message” was that it would be a “win win” , both for society and for the individuals concerned, if more people were gainfully employed in the vineyard instead of spending all day hanging about aimlessly in the marketplace.

Correspondingly, in the contemporary context, it would be better off in if there was overemployment either in the government workforce or in the higher education workforce than if civil servants(across the “pond”) and university lecturers(on this side of the “pond”) were laid off “en masse”... Never mind the cost cutting. Engaging the community in gainful employment should be an end in itself. It is rather like the daily walk.

What medical science has belatedly recognised(in an avalanche of recent publications) is that you do not have to walk to a specific destination , with a specific aim in view, in order to obtain all the benefits of a daily walk.

And, the benefits are impressive:- Better control of blood pressure and blood sugar, reduction in myocardial stiffness and joint stiffness, , improvement in mental health, and improvement in immune function due to boosting of vitamin D levels by exposure to daylight.

These are the analogies we need to bear in mind before we embark on the indiscriminate adoption of artificial intelligence to replace the human workforce, all in the name of efficiency and cost cutting.

Oscar



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

Articles for the December/January edition by **27th March**. 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

This, this is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable friend,
Whose love is as great as His power,
And neither knows measure nor end.

'Tis Jesus, the first and the last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come.

Joseph Hart (1712-68)




Rev Catharine Hughes

 catharine.hughes@methodist.org.uk

 @abrewandaprayer

 facebook.com/revcatharine

 0161 226 6019