

KEYSTONE

United Didsbury Methodist Church

Minister: Rev. Catharine Hughes



The First Sunday of Advent is upon us.
Give us ears to hear, O God, and eyes
to watch, that we may know your
presence in our midst during this
holy season of joy as we anticipate
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

NOVEMBER 2025

Minister's letter

The Manse
64 Brantingham Road
Manchester M21 0TD

Dear friends,

Sometimes I think it would be useful to have a TARDIS.

Dr Who aficionados will know immediately that the TARDIS, in the form of an old-fashioned police box, enables the Doctor to travel - in Time And Relative Dimension in Space. Most notably with each iteration of Doctor the decor inside changes and adapts, while remaining incomprehensibly large.

How would I use a TARDIS? Well, it is bigger on the inside than it is on the outside: this would be useful for all the junk (read: items of incredible value...) that I inexorably acquire. And it travels in time ... which would be useful when I need to be in two places at once... and space ... which might enable me to teleport between the manse and the church, avoiding all the traffic.

We measure time as a constant with clocks and watches but, while not achieving the elasticity of the Dr Who franchise, it often moves relative to our viewpoint. Sometimes days seems to fly by, and on other occasions they crawl slower than a snail. We all notice this when somebody tells us the number of shopping days until Christmas. It's never what we expect (and usually falls far short of what we require)!

And when we come to remember loved ones that have passed before us - which the church recognises with All Souls and All Saints Days on 1 & 2 November - it can feel a long time since we last spoke to or spent time with them. For some each day is a drawn-out struggle with loneliness, but for others the memories are like yesterday. Our Remembrance Day poetry also speaks of the inconsistency of time. "They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn."

Time may be the fourth dimension, but it has an ability to expand and contract as thoughts and events come and go. Rather than being measured as a constant maybe it should have an elasticity quotient.

We sometimes think of things happening in 'God's Time' and 'Our Time'. 'Our time' usually demands immediacy, such as when we pray for those who are sick to get well; or delays, such as when we only have an hour in which to do things that will take at least two.

In contrast, 'God's time' allows us space to breathe and relax, for God's timing is always spot on. '*His ways are perfect and all his ways are just*' (Deut 32.4). We can find peace as we turn all the cares of this world over to God, trusting that God has it in hand.

With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you...

2 Peter 3.8-9

So, I don't need a TARDIS. I need to trust the God of all space and time, for God is faithful and true, and will fulfil his promise in me... and you. Instead, we need to 'Trust And Rest, Dwelling In Spirit'...

Catharine

Preachers for November

2 nd November	Rev. Catharine Hughes – <i>Holy Communion</i>
9 th November	Rev. Mandy Boon
16 th November	Anne Wilde – <i>Toy Service</i> – all your kind gifts will be distributed between Chelwood Foodbank and Moston Baby Basket - toys, crayons, colouring books, and new-born nappies, talcum powder, baby wipes, gifts for Mums, etc.
23 rd November	Local Arrangement
30 th November	Adrian Curtis



Readings for November

2 nd Nov	Habakkuk: 1-4, and 2: 1-4; Psalm 119: 137-144; 2 Thessalonians 1: 1-4, 11-12 Luke 19: 1-10
9 th Nov	Haggai 1:15b - 2:9; Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17 Luke 20:27-38
16 th Nov	Isaiah 65:17-25; Canticle: Isaiah 12:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; Luke 21:5-19
23 rd Nov	Jeremiah 23:1-6; Psalm 46; Colossians 1:11-20; Luke 23:33-43
30 th Nov	Isaiah 2: 1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13: 11-14; Matthew 24: 36-44



NOVEMBER



1st Nov - ALL SAINTS DAY - is a Christian holiday dedicated to honouring all saints – those recognized and canonized by the Church, as well as others who may not have been formally acknowledged. These "saints" are people who have lived a life of faith and are believed to be in heaven. The day is meant to celebrate their lives, examples, and contributions to the Christian faith.



9th Nov – REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

of silence at 11am on November 11; the time and date when hostilities formally ended after more than 4 years of battle during World War I. Poppies are worn as a symbol of respect and tribute on Remembrance Sunday and/or November 11.



10th-16th Nov - INTERFAITH WEEK - Building good relationships

and working partnerships between people of different faiths and beliefs is part of the year-round work of many people and organisations across the UK. Having a special Week provides a focal point, helping to open inter faith activity up to a wider audience, to make us aware of the importance of this vital work.



23rd Nov – WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE SUNDAY

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports from those on the front lines, have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified, and it continues today.



30th Nov – FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT - The Season of Advent is a season of vigilant waiting, that prepares us to welcome the mystery of the Word Incarnate, but essentially this time prepares us not only to welcome this great event, but to incarnate it in our lives. Let us live this time of waiting not only to celebrate a historical memory, but to repeat this memory in our lives and in the service of others. To wait for the Lord who comes, means to wait and to watch so that the Word of Love enters inside us and focuses us every day of our lives.

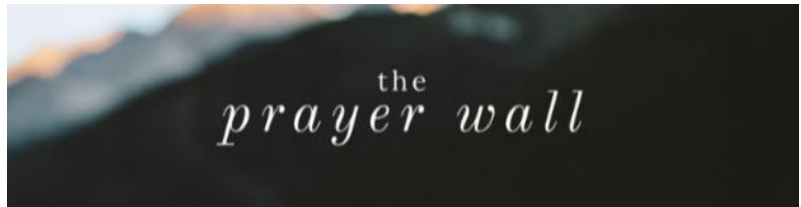
If God brought
you this far.

Trust that He will also get you through it.
The Lord is faithful to finish what he started.



His divine power has given us everything we need
for a godly life through our knowledge of him who
called us by his own glory and goodness.

2 Peter 1:3



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

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**

The October Count

For many years Methodist Churches across the UK had to do what was known as 'the October Count'. Each Sunday the number of people who attended (adults and children) was recorded and submitted to the Connexion. In recent years this has changed slightly, but on 1 November the membership and church attendance numbers are still required to be submitted online in what is now known as Statistics for Mission. (In case you have GDPR concerns it is completely anonymous!)

This forms the basis of the Methodist Connexion's strategies for mission and growth. Locally, the membership numbers form the basis of the circuit treasurer's calculations of the assessment - the amount due from the church to the circuit to pay for ministry support. It is not just to pay for ministers! It also covers safeguarding, training (national and local), the upkeep of manses, Connexional campaigns (e.g. Christmas, Lent), District IT and HR support... and much more that we can tap into when needed.

The assessment for our church for this connexional year is £36,100 - equating to approximately £700 per member, or £60 per month. It has been noted, at a circuit level, that our regular giving barely covers this expense. In addition, we have the cost of the upkeep of our building, and the general costs of our own ministry (such as stationery, advent candles, communion wine). Though churches are charities, they are still affected by inflationary costs and reliant upon your giving.

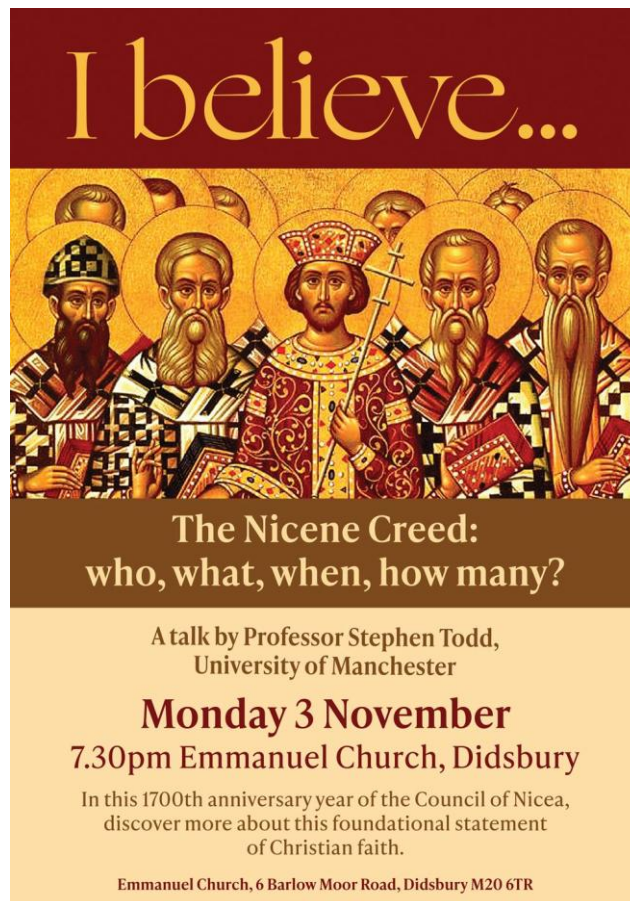
Methodism is based on Connexion: we are all part of one church, where those who have much are encouraged to give over-generously so that those who have less can still flourish. In our circuit, UDMC gives generously so that churches in more deprived areas of the city can still reach out to their communities. Within the church, our giving should also be considered generously: so that those who are comfortable give more than that £60 per month, and those who cannot afford so much can be covered by their generous love.

While Methodism may have had an October Count, God doesn't count us up - at least, not based upon our bank balance. God sees into our hearts, and knows whether we give out of love and generosity, or grudge and reluctance. *The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love* (Gal 5.6).

If you have any questions about giving to the church, please contact the Treasurer, Chris Davis, on chrisdavis34@btinternet.com or phone 0161-445-6988.

A stylized, handwritten-style cursive script that reads "Thank you!". The letters are fluid and connected, with a large 'T' and 'y'.

to everyone who supported me (both with prayer and money) in my Shine Night Walk on 10th October. My sister and I have raised over £1,000 for Cancer Research between us - way above our original target. We are both overwhelmed by the generosity of family and friends. Rev Catharine



We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty; the maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.



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 3.15pm after tea/coffee and biscuits/cakes). The door is open from 1.40pm, so do pop along if you can, you'll be made very welcome. *Rosie x*

6th November
20th November

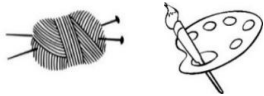
Armchair exercise with Patsy
Rev. Catharine



Circuit Film Club will meet on **20th November at 7.00pm**, and in preparation for discussion the film will be 'Your Name' available from eBay and Amazon. If you'd like to come along, please contact me at lizstuartlp@aol.com and I will send you the Zoom code.



A drink, fellowship & prayer with friends at Caramello, Didsbury, 10.00am for an hour. Open to all. Meeting for an hour on **Wednesday 5th and 19th November.**



ART SPACE – Meets on Wednesdays between 10.00am and noon. This is 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 give it a go? Patsy x

Fellowship Group – We meet on a Monday fortnightly, the next dates being 10th and 24th November in Room 1 from 2pm until 3pm and continuing fortnightly – and we share tea and coffee. For further details speak to Nick or Patsy. All welcome, even if you can't attend regularly.

Badminton Club in the hall on Tuesdays from 8.00pm and all are welcome to pop along. For further details and to check through August that Badminton is on each week, please email: nicholaspalfreyman@yours.com for confirmation, thank you.



We Need Your Help



Chelwood Foodbank As always, thanks for your donations of food and money - always something in the box, so thanks again. Rosie x



Moston Baby Basket Please continue to pop things in the box; I continue to deliver the items regularly; the ladies are most grateful for all contributions. It seems to be a rare week when there are no referrals and no delivery to be made up. All contributions are valued – most needed - babies 3-6 months (particularly) & 6-9 months. Thanks for all the support; very much appreciated. Paul x

We pray for the prosperity of our church. For the unity of Christians
For relief for the poor and afflicted. For the healing of the sick
and we hand them all over to our Lord and Saviour. Amen



Manchester Methodists
Seeking, serving, sharing Christ



Job Vacancy

**PART TIME LETTINGS
ADMINISTRATOR**



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CHURCH, PARRS WOOD ROAD,
EAST DIDS'BURY M20 5QQ**

SALARY £4230 (£14.10/HOUR)

**FLEXIBLE PART-TIME WORK,
25 HOURS PER MONTH.**

**United Didsbury Methodist Church is seeking a
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to oversee the hire and scheduling of our busy
church premises.**

The deadline for applications is 13.11.25

**To express your interest and request
further information and an application
form please email
udmclettings@gmail.com or contact Rev
Catharine Hughes tel:07778 680703**

Mind games, ancient and modern

The story goes that in 430 BC the Greek island of Delos was devastated by plague. When the islanders consulted the Oracle of Delphi, Appollo's answer was to instruct them to double his altar. However, when they built an altar with sides twice as long as the original; they did not realise that this was a fundamental "schoolboy howler" because doubling the sides of a cube does not double its volume. Accordingly, Apollo was not satisfied, and would not settle for any approximations. And so, the plague got worse. That is how the Delian problem arose. The solution required intellectual tools and mathematical techniques beyond what was available at the time. Likewise in modern mathematics:- for example, in computer graphics, algorithms constantly approximate "impossible" constructions by creating approximations of mathematical relationships that are *impossible* to construct with precision. Even the area of a circle has an irrational basis because the formula " πr^2 " is based on the irrational number " π " (i.e. a number that cannot be expressed as a simple ratio of two integers and has a decimal expansion that goes on forever). The lesson to be learnt from the Delian problem and from contemporary mathematics is that some things are simply *impossible*.

Which takes me to the great plagues of human history. The Delian plague was not the last, neither will the recent covid pandemic be the last. The impossible task that will confront our country, next time round is how to mitigate the risk of devastation attributable the pandemic if our best preparation is to deplete our resource of nursing homes by making it increasingly difficult for foreign care home workers to obtain British citizenship, and by depleting secondary care of its resource of nursing staff by making it increasingly difficult for foreign nurses to obtain British citizenship.

Neither of those approximations will mitigate the buildup of long queues at A&E and in hospital corridors (and in hospital cafés as in a café at William Harvey Hospital on 18/9/2025) when the next epidemic does its rounds. And there will be fewer nursing homes to which patients can be discharged irrespective of whether or not they have tested negative for Covid at the point of discharge. Some things, both in Ancient Greece, and in contemporary society, are simply *impossible*.

PS: - The article is entitled - "Why Ancient Greece's smartest minds couldn't solve the Delian problem" by Nick Kampouris

Afterthought:- **Plague by another name: war as an analogy of the plague** - Due to the devastation it inflicts on human lives and livelihoods, armed conflict on the scale of the second world war could also be categorised as plague by another name. The post war response to that economic challenge, coupled with the economic challenge of the launch of the NHS on the year national debt peaked at 250% of the country's gross domestic product, was to invite foreign workers to come here to promote economic recovery and to make the NHS a viable proposition. That was one way to resolve the analogy to the Delian problem.

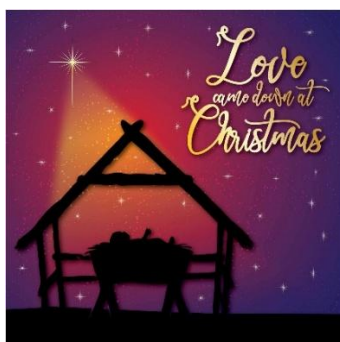
And what about the scientists who might be called upon to solve future versions of the Delian problem? Not a chance, given the fact that universities have embarked on a staff redundancy strategy, according to the news item which reads "Universities have collectively announced more than 12,000 job cuts on the last year, new analysis from the University and College Union (UCU) suggests" (Hayley Clarke and Emily Doughty reporting in BBC news 10th October 2025)

OSCAR

We pray for the eternal rest of our deceased relatives and friends, for those who died during the two World Wars and Wars throughout the land, those who have lost someone they loved and perhaps didn't get chance to say goodbye. We also pray for those suffering with grief or illness at this time. We pray for confidence in the loving mercy of God, and look forward to celebrating again in his amazing coming into our world to save us. Amen



The Circuit website is **manchestermethodists.org.uk** – why not take a look and see what's going on in our District. See what we do in the Circuit, the different resources, get a prayer for comfort and strength and lots, lots more.



There will be board at the back of church for you to place your Christmas card on to your church family and a box to put your donation in for charity, if you wish.



A small selection of cards on sale at Francis House. You can pop in or pay by phoned with your credit/debit card on 0161-434-7252 or go to www.francishouse.org.uk



Happy Birthday to all born in the month of NOVEMBER xxx



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

Cynthia's chit-chat

MacMillan Coffee Morning – This event took place in late 3 October, so it was too late to go into the October Keystone. I was invited to the coffee morning by Helen and Paul who have organised this event for many years. This year there was heavy rain, plus bus strikes; I could have easily stayed at home, but I thought I must make the effort. We had refreshments indoors and then sat in the garden under very large umbrellas! We didn't get wet and the sum raised was over £700 – wasn't that wonderful.



Home Coffee Birthday Party – This was held in October and had been planned for the summer, but was postponed due to bad weather. There were lovely refreshments and lots of children's activities, facepainting, storytelling and lots of children (very energetic!) wearing fancy dress. The afternoon finished with the choir of 'Didsbury Daytime Singers' – a lovely, happy afternoon.

My lovely previous neighbours – Catherine and her children came to visit me recently; it was a surprise visit and I'm always happy to see them. The children told me they were going to do a walk to raise funds for Cancer (in memory of Steve) who they both loved. I was really touched; a lovely kindness and much appreciated by me.

Grandmas – I was recently getting off the bus near my flat when I saw the boys from the house by the fields. They walked with me and were amazed to see the automatic gate to our car park closing on its own. I had to show them how it worked; I thought I was going to be there until it went dark; they call me Grandma because they think all ladies with white or grey hair are Grandmas! The two boys were delightful.



TV- Memories

Four in a Bed recently showed Haltwhistle (Northumberland), a place I know well. In fact, I am still in contact with someone I met at the Methodist Church on one of my many visits, before I met Steve. Escape to the Country recently visited Clun (Shropshire), a place we knew well. We used to sit by the river and then have afternoon tea in one of the lovely cafes. Happy memories.

Bye for now and God bless
Cynthia x

Note – Please support The Old Parsonage (see next page) in this wonderful event. I will be there, so see you then!



We would love you to join us for
Have You

Heard?

By Joel Raney

Sung by **United Christian Singers**

Led by Anne Wilde.

Including favourite carols for everyone.

A **FREE** event at

Heaton Moor United Church,

On **Saturday, DECEMBER 6TH at 6pm**

Donations for the Church Charities.

More on “I may be eighty something but I am not geriatric”

According to a recent article entitled “Prehistoric Medicine: How Neanderthals and early hominids cared for the sick and the vulnerable”, analysis of the contents of the Shanidar Cave in Iraq, where the skeleton of a Neanderthal known as Shanidar 1 was discovered, that individual suffered from advanced osteoarthritis of his lower limbs, profound hearing loss and blindness in one eye (i.e. multiple comorbidities typical of old age). Despite this profound combination of disabilities, Shanidar 1 lived well into his forties, in the era where “forty was the new eighty”. Crucially, his survival would not have been possible without sustained, long term assistance from others. In other words, his example speaks to the deeply ingrained social structures and compassion that existed among Neanderthals. The latter were a species that, despite lacking written language (including A level English) developed a compassionate approach to health and sickness.

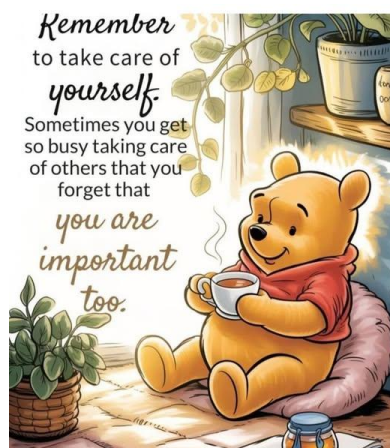
By analogy, despite suboptimal literacy in A Level English, we have nursing homes and hospitals where immigrants from less advanced societies practise caregiving in a manner that seems remarkably similar to the care giving practised by our Neanderthal forbears. Accordingly, the inescapable conclusion is that the price we pay for human progress is that we increasingly distance ourselves from the compassionate dimension to age-related disability.

PS - The article is entitled “Prehistoric medicine: How Neanderthals and early hominids cared for the sick and the vulnerable” <https://www.g-med.com/page/view-post?&id=231377>

OSCAR



Our Church Family Weekend will be 7th and 8th February 2026. Rev Katie Smith (Mission Area Lead for Greater Manchester) will be coming to lead our activities on the Saturday.





Rev. Catharine, Liz, Patsy, Nick, Anne, Cynthia, Oscar and Rosie x

Articles for the CHRISTMAS edition to be with me no later than **27th November** please. *This will be a December/January edition.* Please pass to me at church or email rosieblayds@gmail.com or 07758 011362.

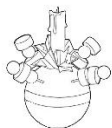
Much love as always.

Rosie xxx

Dates for your diary: -

Sunday 16th Nov Gift (Toy) Service led by Anne Wilde

Sunday 30th Nov Ecumenical Advent Carol Service (organised by Didsbury & Burnage Churches Working Together) at Christ Church, 35 Darley Ave M20 2DZ at 3.00pm.



Tuesday 9th Dec: Christingle Service when we welcome Reception Class from Broad Oak – *to be confirmed* **AND** Christingle Service for Guides & Brownies. 6.00pm – *to be confirmed*



Wednesday 10th Dec Pre-School Nativity Play 11.30am – *to be confirmed*

Sunday 14th Dec Church Christmas Lunch at The Heatons 12.30pm



Sunday 21st Dec Carol Service

Monday 22nd Dec 'Quiet' Christmas Carol Service at 7.00pm



Thurs 25th Dec – Led by local preacher - 10.45am

Sunday 28th Dec No service

Sunday 4th Jan Covenant Service -Rev Catharine at 10.45am

The above December dates to be confirmed in your next magazine. Rosie x

Last Thought

He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds

Psalm 147:3

Gracious God, we come before You with heavy hearts,
seeking healing for our broken world. We pray for all those
affected by war, both physically and emotionally. Bring comfort
to the wounded, strength to the weak,
and hope to the despairing.

Amen



Rev Catharine Hughes



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@abrewandaprayer



facebook.com/revcatharine



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