

**FEBRUARY 2025**

*'And now these three remain; faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.'*



Why is love the greatest?

“Faith is what you have in living with God on earth. Hope is the guiding principle of death defeated and the kingdom of Heaven opened by Christ. Love is what you have now, and in all its fullness in eternity where we spend the rest of eternity in the presence of the Almighty God of creation who is love. No longer a poor reflection but fully known. Love is a permanent feature of the universe, the other two are temporary”

This was spoken by a man during a Service at Callin Court, the MHA Home in Chester. Not my words, but a wise, Christian man with a lifetime of Christian witness and service, continuing to bless me, us all, in gentle and loving ways. There is much wisdom and love in the Church.

However, the world, currently seems to be held in the superficial grip of populism, where we communicate through emojis and think love is a red heart given on a card on February 14<sup>th</sup>. May we become bold O Lord.

The world cries out for wisdom, yet the Church, the Synagogue, the Mosque, the Gurdwara, and the Temples are kept silent and out of sight. We get safeguarding scandals and ‘Bishopgate’ stories at a time of real need. Homelessness, drug, alcohol and gambling addiction all at record highs. Knife crime, depression, suicide rates increasing, and that is just the UK without what we see in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Myanmar, Syria and so many other places in this beautiful world.

We can feel detached from all of this, not knowing what we can ‘do’ other than pray. However, we see some action; Trinity Safe Space for Asylum Seekers in Widnes/Runcorn area; The Hub at Helsby; the Afghan community in Garden Lane; the care for the world with solar panels and eco-friendly churches. We see warm hubs and community coffee mornings and meals. We can witness rising awareness in dementia care with Frodsham Methodist Church dedicating a whole weekend

[March 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup>] to memory awareness and we have the Hope Journeys of Christmas and Easter. We can celebrate what churches and community groups are doing; often under the radar yet impacting on lives. Church continues to punch above its weight and remain attached to their local communities, impacting into the wider world.

All of this takes hard work and dedication. This is what love is. Love is not superficial, but is patient, kind, non-judgmental, nor self-seeking. Love rejoices in the truth and seeks out justice. Love never fails.

The Hebrew scriptures brought us a command to love; 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.' (Deuteronomy 6:5) and Jesus extends the Levitical code (Lev 19:18) by adding; 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Matthew 22:39.

As we pass through Valentine's Day, the day Love is remembered, and approach Lent, a time of reflection and seeking God's will, let us thank God for the love poured into our hearts that compels us to serve, listen to and pray for others. Let us continue to seek God's guidance, blessing and wisdom in the days ahead, and let us be assured that one day, each of us will be lost in wonder, love and praise as we see the fullness of God's love we know in Jesus Christ, and will know in all its fullness one day.

## **Gordon**

*p.s. These pastoral letters can also be used to share news, such as the passing on to be with the Lord, earlier this year, of Shelagh Smith, the widow of Revd. Charles Smith. A faithful and wise woman.*

*Also; the Circuit Meeting with opportunity to focus on Mission activities in the Circuit has been changed to Tuesday March 11<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm allowing us to focus on Circuit business. We will put on a Vision event in the summer. This also allows us all the freedom to share in Halton Trinity's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary weekend with the Saturday morning (March 8<sup>th</sup>) full of events.*

*And finally. It is with sadness that Oakmere Methodist Chapel draws to a close as a worshipping community at the end of February. This is not the end of the story; but a new beginning. There will be an official closing Service on Pentecost Sunday; June 8<sup>th</sup> at 4.00 pm, all invited. I have a dream for Oakmere, and beginning to share this with some has been heartwarming and affirming. Please pray for Ann, Eric and all at Oakmere and for the Resurrection there that we seek as Christ's faithful servants.*