



# St Margaret's Church

Together we aim to:  
Worship God, Proclaim Jesus,  
Grow in the Spirit and Serve the World



## In Contact

25th July 2021

### Hebrews 12: 1-3



### Olympics 1: Run the Race

When I was at school, there were words on a games afternoon I used to dread: *"The pitches are too waterlogged/frozen, we are going on a cross country run."* I was looking forward to rugby or football, but a cross country run was the last thing I wanted to do. The teachers used to place themselves so they could see if we were looking for short cuts. So there was only one thing to do - run!

In the Olympics, we are going to see many races in the main athletics stadium - some over in less than 10 seconds. The race the author of Hebrews is talking about is much more like a cross country run. There is a start, markers on the way and a finish. The race begins when we first decide to follow Jesus. Our race is marked out with special moments. These may be services like Confirmation or significant moments or experiences. For Jesus, these would have been times like his baptism or the transfiguration (Matthew 17. 1-13). They are often reminders of how much God loves us or a deep touch of His Spirit. We can hold onto these in tougher times as we remind ourselves of God's faithfulness.

Having these sacred moments to hold on to helps us to persevere as we run the race (Hebrews 12. 1). But we are also surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. Those from the Old Testament are listed in Hebrews 11 (it is well worth going through this and thinking of what we know about those mentioned). We also have heroes of the faith that could be added to that list - some designated as "saints" and others who we admire for their faith in God and their ordinariness.

There will be few athletes competing in Tokyo 2020 that do not have a team around them of coaches, physiotherapists, nutritionists etc. In order to persevere, we should have a good support network around us to spur one another on. We are going to face hard times. Jesus faced them and promises He will be with us through ours (v.3). But we also need to gather others around us who can support us, give us wise advice and even challenge us.

Most importantly, we need to keep focused or re-focusing on Jesus. He was with us at the start of the race. We can get distracted or discouraged, but He is there to help us back on track and to "perfect" our faith.

Run the race with perseverance. There is a finish line and the prize is out of this world! Life will not always be easy, but Jesus will always be with us. So there is only one thing to do - run!



## Bible Verse for 2021:

I am about to do something new; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43: 19

### **This and Next week:**

Our sermons themes are inspired by the Olympics: this week's title is 'Run the Race' and next week's will be 'More than Gold'.

### **Live Songs of Praise:**

Later today at 6.30pm we will be hosting a Songs of Praise event outside church (weather permitting) with St. Peter's & St. Mark's Levenshulme. Come and sing.

**New Wine United Breaks Out:** 6.30pm for refreshments.

Evening Celebrations 7.00-8.30pm followed by a time of prayer ministry

**Thursday 29th July:** St Margaret's with Paul Harcourt.

**Friday 30th July:** St Peter's with Amy Orr-Ewing.

**Saturday 31st July:** St Margaret's with Katia Adamas.

**Sunday 1st August:** St Peter's with Sebastian Stakset.

**Monday 2nd August:** St Margaret's with Vicky Lloyd.

**Tuesday 3rd August:** St Peter's with Agu Irukwu.

### **New arrangements since the lifting of legal restrictions on 19th July:**

we are proceeding with caution. Although all rows of chairs are now open, we would advise people not in the same bubble to maintain social distancing. Hand sanitiser is available and apart from those leading from the front we advise the wearing of masks. Bibles have now been returned to the back of seats making them easily available to everyone in church. We intend to re-start refreshments after church from September. We are still waiting for formal guidance from the Church of England who in their turn are waiting for government guidance for places of worship.

### **July 25th to 31st Please Pray for:**

- ◆ People living in Woodside Ave, Elmhurst Drive, Wood View Ave, Guernsey Close & Errwood Rd (Green End to Shawbrook Road).
- ◆ More people to leaflet streets & for prayer requests to arrive as a result.
- ◆ Millions in Latin America who have been plunged into poverty because of the pandemic.
- ◆ Wisdom for each person to decide when to return to church.
- ◆ Good weather for the Silly Summer Sports events & help for the team.
- ◆ Opportunity within Silly Sports Saturdays to present the gospel clearly.
- ◆ TEAR Fund campaign for everyone everywhere to have access to vaccines.

### **Television & Radio this Sunday:**

**BBC 2 - 13.15pm: Songs of Praise.** The Rev Kate Bottley joins a family discovering the Catholic history of Boscobel House in Shropshire, and we revisit Frank Skinner's conversation about prayer with Sean Fletcher.

**BBC Radio 4 - 8.10am: Sunday Worship.** The theme of the Keswick Convention this year is 'Faithful.' Preacher Alasdair Paine (vicar of St Andrew the Great, Cambridge) preaches on Psalm 78 in the Convention's new venue.