

February - Group News - 2021

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From Jan

'When you heard the word of truth, the good news of salvation and believed in Him, you likewise were marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit, - the guarantee of our inheritance when God redeems His people to the praise of His glory'. Ephesians 1: 13-14

At Christmas time I always enjoy receiving cards and letters from people I've not been able to see for a while, - and of course, more so this last year. However, one of the letters that arrived in December, had somehow become unstuck on its journey. Whether it had gone to a wrong address and been opened by mistake, or whether it had not been properly stuck in the first place I don't know, but what interested me was the sticker over the envelope bearing an apology from the Post Office. Clearly the fact that the seal had been broken was considered a serious thing, - serious enough to merit some kind of formal acknowledgement.

This small incident shed some new light to me on the words of Paul to the Ephesians. If a seal is important today, it was ten times more so in his time. The personal seal of an important dignitary or official, often bearing the impression of the sender, and sealing that document with that sender's authority, guaranteed safe passage and the authenticity of what lay within.

So it is with the gift God has sent in Jesus Christ. The promise of mercy and new life in Him is given by God's authority and His guarantee. He has accomplished all that needs to be done, overcoming everything that comes between Himself and us.

As we struggle on in this seemingly never-ending series of lockdowns and absent from those we love, we just need to hang on to His

promise...our inheritance is certain, the promise is sure..signed and sealed!

May the Lord bless you and keep you. Shalom

Jan

From Elizabeth Middleton

The family and I have been overwhelmed and humbled to receive over 170 cards and letters expressing sadness at Davids passing. There is a huge void in all our live which can never be filled, but we are thankful that he is now at peace.

Messages of sympathy from St. Andrew's have been a great comfort. If you have an email newsletter for the members perhaps you would be happy to include a thank you from me for their thoughtfulness.

I hope you are keeping safe in the challenging times we all have to cope with.

With kind regards.

Elizabeth Middleton

From Rosemary (Uganda)

The latest message from Rosemary includes thanks for the recent payment of £165 from St. Andrews (part carried over from 2019). Now that all three dependent nieces have qualified and are in work, she will be able to fulfil her dream of moving out of Kampala back to her home village of Kabwohe in SW Uganda, an agrarian community much more dependent on climate conditions. The country has been in a state of unrest preceding both national and presidential elections in January, with violent demonstrations and deployment of army personnel to maintain order, resulting in 80 deaths. Say a prayer for political stability in Uganda, and specially for Rosemary as she prepares to move house.

Kryisia Reeves. 1946 to 2021

The church is saddened as our good friend has lost her long battle with cancer. We will miss her cheery smile, her beautiful flower arrangements and the superwomen effort she put into fund raising for the church. Her tombola stall at coffee mornings and the annual bazaar were legendary. She also sometimes stood on the windy High Street on market days with book stalls and left over tombola stalls as well as having stalls at the cricket club and rugby club. She will be greatly missed. R.I.P. Kryisia.

Guisborough

The decision of the Guisborough elders, in consultation with members, to delay the reopening of the church - given that the rise in Covid 19 infections posed a significant risk for people meeting together - was a big disappointment to the fellowship. However, safety must always be a first consideration as we take into account the great suffering and loss of life caused by this worldwide pandemic.

It is the 15th, March last year since we had a service - and now more than a year since we last worshipped in the sanctuary, on the 12th, January, which was then closed because of a heating failure. As we look ahead all of the indications are that it could be that a year will have passed before members are able to come together in the church. We may be disappointed by these events - but must not be downhearted.

During the closure members and friends of the church have received online services and prayers provided by the Rev Margaret and Ken Harris, assisted by one of our elders, Madge Baird - with the additional support given in the Northern Synod weekly E-news letter. Then from October and November time appeared a Guisborough news letter and Group News to inform the fellowship of current, local

events. We may not be together in fellowship but we can be together in spirit - a Holy Spirit of fellowship which will sustain through this difficult time.

While members have been absent from our church one person had been ever present, Sandra Verrill, an elder and our caretaker, who has attended to the building during the many weeks of the closure. Although there has been a lack of activity Sandra has still been busy, keeping a check on the state of the building, assisting with work on the sanctuary and a friendly face of welcome when the new tenants, Jack and Katherine, took up residency of the church flat. Unfortunately, Sandra has recently suffered from the Covid 19 virus. We can all understand how this would be a worryingly difficult experience, but now Sandra is making a good recovery. From this point in the year we look forward to Easter - a time to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. Whether we are together, as a fellowship, or not it will still be a special joyous occasion.

Ray Tunnicliffe.

Lets Look Forward with Optimism

Please keep your news and information coming my way and I will endeavour to produce the next copy of Group News for sometime in April. It may be that we will then be able to announce the opening of our churches to worship for Pentecost.

Whilst Covid rates are currently falling and there is hope that some activities will be able to resume in the coming months; it is also the case we will only be able to proceed gradually and with great caution, remaining mindful of guidance we are receiving from both church and government. Please keep our elders and church leaders in your prayers as they seek to guide us all through the weeks and months ahead.

Roger Wheeler