

Group News



** April * 2015 * April **

Part of the URC Northern Synod – www.urc-northernsynod.org.uk

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Minister

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Dear Friends,

I have to say that I love celebrating Easter - and no I don't mean eating lots of chocolate eggs, although a bit of that can be nice too!!! But even more than that I love the experience each year of having the opportunity to spend time reflecting on and reliving Jesus' journey through Holy Week and on towards the events that he faced at Easter itself - the events that make up the final week of Jesus' life. At no other point in the year do we get to imagine ourselves walking in Jesus' shoes in this way through a week of his life, and what a week it was. We have a lot more detail about this week of Jesus' life than any other in fact, and it gives us a real chance to explore how Jesus felt about a variety of situations which he faced that week.

So what were those events of his last week of life? Well the week of Jesus' passion starts with his triumphant entry in Jerusalem to great excitement and celebrity greetings and the waving of palm branches on Palm Sunday, followed by overnighting, as he often did when he came to Jerusalem, staying with friends in Bethany. The next morning he sets off back to Jerusalem, cursing the fig tree on the way into the city, before weeping over Jerusalem with the city walls ahead of him. When he gets into the city he heads for the Temple, where he flares with anger, turning over the tables and clearing out the Temple for the second time in his ministry before returning to Bethany again for the night.

The following day, the Tuesday, he again sets off back to Jerusalem, and on finding the fig tree withered which he had cursed the day before, he teaches on the need for faith. On returning to the Temple again he takes possession of the Temple and its precincts, preaching and pronouncing woe upon his enemies. On his way back to Bethany later on in the day he gives his Olivet discourse. Meanwhile Judas is bargaining with the Sanhedrin about what he was going to get for betraying Jesus.

There are no record in the gospels about what Jesus did on the Wednesday, but we know he remained in Bethany that day amidst all the busy preparations for the passover celebrations. Meanwhile Judas and the Sanhedrin make their plans for Jesus' arrest.

After another night in Bethany, the events of Thursday begin with Jesus sending John and Peter ahead to finalise plans for Jesus and the disciples to celebrate passover together that evening. So Jesus and the twelve gather after sunset with Jesus washing the disciples feet before they sit down to eat what was to be their last meal together, although Judas departs before they finish the meal. During the meal Jesus breaks bread and offers wine to drink in a way that spoke symbolically of so much more. They leave the upper room and make their way to Gethsemane where staying awake to pray leads to betrayal and arrest, and in the small hours of the night Jesus is led away to the High Priest's house while the Sanhedrin is convened. The disciples scatter.

And so begins the drawn out process of Jesus' trial, firstly before Annas, secondly before the whole Sanhedrin, thirdly before the Sanhedrin as dawn breaks where the charges are reiterated, before his fourth, fifth and sixth trials before Pilate, Herod and then Pilate again before sentencing occurs and Jesus is handed over to be crucified. After being whipped, mocked and finally marched out of the city walls to a nearby hill, Jesus is crucified around 9 o'clock that morning. Six hours later, Jesus is dead.

But that, as we know, is not the end. For the cross, far from being the lowest point of Jesus' life, turns out to be highlight - this was, after all, what Jesus was born for. He was born to die on the cross, to highlight the depths of God's love for us all. In facing death Jesus was ready to suffer the worst that life could throw at him in order to show his love for humankind. This was God's master plan being put into action, a plan which was further revealed when he rose from death on Easter morning and showed himself alive to his amazed disciples. Faith reborn, faith alive and active in those who were ready to believe and in those of us who still believe today! As we journey with Jesus throughout Holy Week let us aim to uncover new truths bringing faith alive for us, deepening our faith and, in turn, inspiring others!

God bless! Revd Catey Morrison

For Our Prayers

Northern Synod Prayer Diary

5th April Easter - Synod trip to Mozambique this month; Elsdon Avenue LEP, Seaton Delaval; Blyth; Revd Greg Thompson

12th April St Mark's, Amble; Revd Alison Mills

19th April Interviews for shared Mission Enabler and Learning & Development Officer this week - St George's, High Heaton; St Cuthbert's LEP, Heaton; Revd Dr Grant Wilson

26th April PCM (Church in Mozambique): Ministers in training at Ricatla Ecumenical Seminary and the work of the Seminary; Vasco Sitoi as he continues his theological studies in Brazil; Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle Rt Revd Seamus Cunningham

Prayerful Thoughts

It's a bright day in the middle of March and I see some red tinsel coiled round some dandelion leaves and it reminds me of Christmas. ~ Thank you Father God for the baby born at Bethlehem.

Catherine

From the squalor of a borrowed stable, by the Spirit and a Virgin's faith, to the anguish and the shame of scandal came the Saviour of the human race. But the skies were filled with the praise of heaven, shepherds listen as the angels tell of the gift of God come down to man at the dawning of Immanuel.

Stuart Townend

Group Prayer Pointers

5th April Pray for the Easter message to reach out far and wide from our churches this Easter. Pray for those who will be hearing the story or the significance of the story for the first time this Easter, that the seed of the good news will take root and grow in them.

12th April Pray for the members and friends of our church in Lingdale as they cope with the reality of their church buildings now being closed. Pray as the remaining members find new ways of being able to spend time in prayer, in worship and in fellowship together and not lose contact altogether.

19th April Pray for all those struggling within our pastorate with ill-health, grief and loss, and changing patterns of life as a result. Give them the resources to cope with all they are facing, and help those around them to know how to support them and let them know we care.

26th April Pray for families who are supporting their teenagers through exams through the coming months, that they may know how to offer guidance and help and love, without getting in the way and provoking additional stress. Pray for peace within families at this time.

Maundy Thursday Service at Guisborough

In a change from previous years, the Maundy Thursday Service at Guisborough, which is a service open to everyone in the Group, is this year not going to be a service with light supper, but instead is going to be a more contemplative service concluding with communion. The service will begin at 7pm and is to be held in the hall accessed up the path at the side of the church. Please for personal prayer.

FAF Club

Blowing Your Cover

FAF Club will next meet on Sunday 19th April from 6.30-8.30pm at the Manse. Please ring Catey for more information or for a lift. There is also opportunity for FAF Club members to go down to the Midlands to attend Crossfire Christian Youth Camp May 22nd-25th. Please speak to Catey about a booking form if you haven't already got one.

The Blowing Your Cover course is now restarting, with two more sessions to take place with the church services in April/May and June. The rest of the course will then take place in the September onwards. This evangelism course is a wonderful opportunity to learn about sharing our stories of faith and all that God means to us.

Manse Afternoon Tea for Mozambique

Catey, John and family are holding an afternoon tea on Saturday 25th April from 1-4pm to raise money for the Synod's Mozambique fund for the Church in Mozambique. Feel free to drop by at any point in the afternoon. Donations of cakes or nibbles most welcome!

Group Safeguarding Officer needed!

The Group is seeking a Safeguarding Officer to act as a link person to pass on disclosure of abuse of any kind made by a child or vulnerable adult in any one of our churches. Having this position held within the Group saves each of our churches from needing to have their own Safeguarding Officer. However, this still means that we do need a volunteer from one of the churches! Please consider if you are able to do this role for which training will be available, but which is largely one of passing on information given to us by Sunday School teacher, elder, or other, to the correct agencies all of which will be outlined in information provided to the Safeguarding Officer. Catey will also stand as a second Officer, to make it easier to make the necessary decisions, whilst maintaining necessary confidentiality between the two Safeguarding Officers. Please speak to Catey or an elder if you are thinking this is a role you could take on.

Lingdale

You are warmly invited to
Celebration Afternoon Tea
from 4pm – 5.30pm

followed by a final
Service of Thanksgiving
at 5.30pm
Easter Sunday 5th April

serving the community for over 100 years



It's time for us all to treasure the memories

Lingdale United Reformed Church

'In Celebration of Lingdale United Reformed Church'

Much of the following information comes from the booklet, researched and produced by Miss Eva Ward, Miss Joy Scarth and Mrs Beryl Waller to celebrate the Church's centenary in 1981.

In 1880 Lingdale Congregational Church, or Congs, as many people still refer to it, started life not in the building that we are now saying goodbye to, but in borrowed rooms. Thirteen men and eleven women signed the original agreement to form Lingdale Congregational Church, and were officially registered as such in 1881.

For the first four years of the church's life Sunday services were held in the Village's Institute and Reading Rooms (situated at the top of Davison Street), while weeknight meetings were held in the Temperance Hall (a wooden hut that could be found on the corner of Stanghow Road and Davison Street) - the church's harmonium being carried between the two locations as the need arose.

Eventually a permanent home

was sought and the current building was completed in 1885 on land donated by the local mine owners, Pease & Partners. The cost of building the church was met by the congregation and the full £500 was paid off by October 1888, with the minutes recording that "we have a Thanksgiving Service on account of the church being free from debt".

The Manse was built in 1907, with the total cost being £481 15s 51/2d - not much less than the cost of the church some twenty two years earlier. A public tea was held in celebration, with 200 people attending at a cost of 9d each.

The first Pastor was a Mr B C Constable, although Mr F Elson being the first Pastor in the new church building and Rev G R McKeith being the first resident in the Manse. The records note that the Minister between 1915 and 1918 was a Rev N Wass, who was killed when he fell from the roof of the hangar at Marske aerodrome while

“engaged on work of national importance”. The first female Minister was Rev Kathleen Whitfield in 1950.

As well as regular services, over the years the church has tried to reach out to the community in the form of various activities for all ages, from the choir and Young Peoples Christian Association in the early 1900’s, through to the Brotherhood and the tennis club in the 1930’s. There was also the Girl’s Guildry, which became the Girl’s Brigade, and a Youth Group was launched in 1971. There have also been coffee mornings and harvest suppers, quizzes, anniversary services, concerts and more, held over the years.

1943 was the first time we became part of a joint pastorate as we joined with Saltburn Congregational Church, with the arrangement lasting until 1949. Our joint pastorate with Guisborough began in 1961, just prior to the joining together of Presbyterians and Congregationalists in England and Wales to form the United Reformed Church in 1972.

Since the centenary celebrations

of the church in 1981, the joint pastorate with Guisborough became the East Cleveland Group with Linthorpe, Marton and Redcar churches, along with Guisborough and Lingdale, sharing ministers, worship and other special events.

The year 2000 saw an artist in residence, Heather Gatt, working with the community, including the village school, to produce our millennium window. The window represents the various aspects of church and village life, including the “ling” of Lingdale; the farming that surrounds the village, and the mining that created the village. At the heart of it all over the years, and thus the centre of the window, is the cross.

Over the intervening years the Church has continued to reach out to the community, in its worship and other activities. For the young people the Pilots and lately the Boy’s Brigade and Girl’s Association have been held, whilst for the whole community coffee mornings which became the community café. We have continued to mark the passing seasons with Easter craft days, summer activities, the har-

vest supper and quiz, and the Advent Christingle service. We have marked national events with services for Remembrance Sunday and celebrations for the Queen's golden and diamond jubilees.

But times have changed, and attendances, at both worship and other church activities, have dwindled and the time had come to recognise that we could not continue as we were, hard as that decision was.

The centenary booklet contains a piece entitled 'A Sincere Invitation', which was written by Joy Scarth. It includes the following verse:-

“Our church has witnessed
through one hundred years,
Has shared people's difficulties,
joys and tears,
For the Church is its people,
long since and today,
Who, guided by God, seek to

walk in his Way.”

It is all too easy to think of the Church as the building rather than the people, and to think that because the building is closing so too is the church. However, the above verse reminds us that the Church is its people, and they, though few now, remain. The founding members of this church did not need a building when they came together in 1880, so while it is with sadness that we say goodbye to the building, the faithful still have a purpose in the village and share together.

As Christians we know, and are reminded at Easter, that what may seem the end can merely be a new beginning. So may the church in Lingdale go forward from here guided by God to the next stage of their journey, whatever that may be.

Susan Griffiths

Lingdale's Final Service

Please join us in celebrating over one hundred years of the church in Lingdale at the church's closing service on Sunday April 5th at 5.30pm. You are also warmly invited to come and share afternoon tea with us prior to the service, available from 4pm onwards. The members and elders of the church would be delighted to see as many of you as possible from the Group and the village to help there to be a really good send off for these church buildings.

Guisborough

I am enjoying “The Voice” on BBC1 at the moment. It’s a singing competition which is known as the kinder, gentler version of its ITV rival, “X Factor”. The last few shows have been anything but kind and gentle though, with names like “The Battles” and “Knock Out”, seeing the number of contestants being whittled down to just 3 per team. It is a good introduction to how ruthless and challenging the music industry is. It swallows up young people’s dreams, and then spits them out, all in a short space of time. Every year there are a few hopefuls who have had a brief moment in the spotlight and are coming back for more. It seems tough.

Then I think of “Comic Relief Red Nose Day 2015” and some of the short clips of young people’s lives abroad. The disappointment of those singers seems very much a First World problem when compared to children scavenging on a rubbish dump for anything they can sell, or children dying from Malaria for the want of a mosquito net. In the news today is the terrible situation in Vanuatu which has been devastated by Cyclone Pam, such a friendly name for such a destructive force. Homes have been destroyed, along with schools and medical facilities. The future must seem very bleak to the people there who have lost relatives and friends.

Stephen Fry was recently in the news following an interview for an Irish TV programme called “The Meaning of Life”. He was invited to imagine he was addressing God. He said “How dare you create a world in which there is such misery that is not our fault? It’s not

	Vestry	Communion	Door	Flowers
5th April	D Beattie	R Tunnicliffe	D Cross	M Sollett
12th April	J Reynolds		M Burrows	D Cross
19th April	D Cross		J Basham	B Ward
26th April	B Ward		M Ward	M Robson
3rd May	J Basham	J Reynolds	D Cross	M Baird

right.” I think we can all have some sympathy with his emotional rant, except that as Giles Fraser puts it “I don’t believe in the God that Stephen Fry doesn’t believe in either.”

The God I know came to earth as a helpless baby, helped the poor and rejected, spoke truth to authority and power, and was executed on a cross. “God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16 NKJV)

God has shared in our humanity and he shares in our suffering, whether it is the disappointment of broken dreams, or the desperation of lives spent in poverty and disease. Giles Fraser again says “This is precisely the point of Christianity: that God is not some distant observer but suffers alongside humanity.”

I see a lot of suffering in my line of work and I do not close my eyes to the suffering that goes on elsewhere. Sometimes I have a Stephen Fry type rant at God and I know He listens. It is only worth doing because I know He cares.

I don’t pretend to have all the answers to the suffering I see in the world but I was much struck by the words of the hymn we sang to close the service today.

*God is love: and is enfolding all the world in one embrace;
his unfailing grasp is holding every child of every race;
and when human hearts are breaking under sorrow’s iron
rod,
that same sorrow, that same aching wrings with pain the
heart of God.*

(Timothy Rees)

It is a place to start when we are trying to explain our Faith in the face of a suffering world.

Donna Moore.

Guisborough Calendar

- Tue 21st April 2.30pm Belmont Care Home service
Thu April 2nd 7.00pm Group Agape Meal in the Hall. All welcome
Good Friday 10.00am March of Witness in the Town, starting from the Salvation Army Citadel.
Sat 4th April 8.00am Bridge Prayer Breakfast in our church
Easter Day Service followed by distribution of eggs in the town in celebration.

Weekly

- Thursdays 9.30am – 11.30am Market Day Coffee Morning
Thursdays 11.30am Quiet Time – prayers and reflections with Catey, Ken, Norma and others.

Choral Classics this Spring in Guisborough

The Guisborough Choral Society, will be presenting three choral classics in its spring concert. Johann Sebastian Bach's lovely motet *Jesu meine Freude* will be sung in its English version, *Jesus my great pleasure*. The Choral Society will sing Mendelssohn's *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimmittis*, again in English as they were written during one of the German composer's many extended visits to Britain. To close the concert, the choir will perform Englishman Hubert Parry's rousing 1880 setting of a John Milton poem, *Blest Pair of Sirens*.

The choir will be accompanied by well-known organist Andrew Christer, who will also perform some solo pieces. The concert is at 7.30 pm on Saturday 25th April in St. Nicholas Church, Guisborough.

Tickets will be on sale from 4th April at £10 adults, £8 concessions, £1 under-19s. They are available from Guisborough Bookshop and Greensleeves Music (both in Chaloner Street, Guisborough), from www.wegotickets.com, or on the door.

St Andrew's

Coffee Morning

Coffee Morning to be held at 8, Towthorpe, Nunthorpe on Thursday 23rd April 10.00 - Noon. Raffle and Bring and Buy Stall. Tickets £2.00 available from Sheila, Doreen or Joan. Proceeds in aid of church funds. Do come along and join in the chatter.

Coffee for Charity

15 Feb.	Leprosy Mission	£18.00
22 Feb	Teesside Hospice	£17.00
7 Mar	Daisy Chain	£11.00
8 Mar	Boys' Brigade	£16.86
15 Mar	Rosemary Fund	£ 9.40

Prayer Group - Change of Date

In order to avoid Maundy Thursday, for this month only, the prayer group meeting at Audrey Wilson's home in Roseberry Mews will be held on Wednesday 1st April at 2.00pm.

Do come and join us.

Ladies' Fellowship

We had an interesting journey, by slide show, around Iceland from Jimmy Anderson. Although it was July 2014 and summertime it still looked cold with plenty of snow around!

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 14th April 1.30pm to 3.00pm when Betty Brown will be telling us some "Stories".

All welcome.

St Andrew's Calendar

Wed 22 April 1.00-3.00pm Knit 'n Natter

Weekly/Monthly

First Thursday 2.00pm Home Prayer group at 31 Roseberry Mews

Boys Brigade Details available from ministers and church elders

Redcar

Easter Coffee Morning

Saturday 4th April

10am until 12noon

Refreshments, Raffle, Tombola and cake stall

Please support the Easter Coffee morning

Donations of cakes please on the day; Raffle and tombola items please to Kryisia.

Redcar Calendar

Tue 7th April 2.00pm Craft and Chatter Group

Weekly

Wednesday 10.45am Singing Group in the church

Thursday 9.30am Prayers

10.00-11.30am Pop-in Centre

2.00pm Prayer Meeting is held at the home of Catherine Milburn

Preachers

	Easter	12-Apr	19-Apr	26-Apr	3-May
Marton	10.00am N Johnson Communion	C Morrison Parade	M Johnson Communion	C Morrison	J Harper
Guisbo	9.30am C Morrison Communion		C Morrison	K Harris	C Morrison Communion
Redcar	11.00am C Morrison Communion	J Harper	C Morrison United Service	D Moore	C Morrison Communion
Lingdale	5.30pm C Morrison Communion				

Material for the May Magazine to church editors by Sunday 12th April please

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