

Group News



*December 2021 * January 2021*

The monthly magazine for:

Guisborough URC

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Part of the URC Northern Synod – www.unc-northernynod.org.uk

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Pastoral Letter

'In the fullness of time, God sent His own Son, born of a woman under the law, so that we, who were subjects of the law, might be redeemed, and through adoption become His children.' Galatians 4 vv.4-5

Some people claim that there could have been no more opportune moment for the coming of Jesus than the time God actually chose. The Roman empire, they argue, brought unparalleled peace and stability, an opportunity to travel as never before and an intermingling of cultures that brought an openness to new ideas, - just the sort of world in which the gospel could quickly spread.

It's a tempting argument, but it doesn't work, - for the fact is that there are many other times in history for which an equally strong case might be made. If Jesus had come today, for example, how much more of an impact might He have made? Using modern technology He could have relayed His message around the world in seconds. Instead of preaching to small crowds on the hillside, He could have addressed whole nations live by satellite. Surely, if any era qualifies for the label, 'the fullness of time' it should be the 21st Century?

Yet, God didn't choose this or any other date that we might suggest, - He chose that day in the reign of the Emperor Augustus, when Mary and Joseph had gone to Bethlehem to be taxed. Why then? It's impossible for us to say, for we don't know the workings of God's mind. His timing is of His choosing, no-one else's. And surely there is a lesson here for us all, concerning not just the birth of Christ, but the whole of life. We may wonder sometimes why our prayers aren't answered as quickly as we would wish. Equally we may find that God is calling us to grasp the moment when we want to hang back, reluctant to commit ourselves.

Advent reminds us that God's timetable and ours may not be the same, and it asks us if we are ready to put His timing first?

Grace and peace to you all at this special time, and may you be filled with His joy.

Shalom

Jan

Synod Prayers

- 5 December:** PCM and the work of Mozambique Council of Churches; Independent Churches
Representative in the NE, Dr Mark Bonnington; Human Rights Day (10 December)
- 12 December:** The Ministries and Development Committee and Convenor, Revd Ron Forster
St Columba's URC, North Shields; Revd Trevor Jamison; St Andrew's URC, Monkseaton
- 19 December:** Stamfordham LEP (Methodist/URC); Revds Jona Sewell and Colin Barrick (Methodist);
Bellingham LEP (Methodist/URC); Falstone with Kielder URC; Wark LEP (Methodist/URC); Deacon Anne Taylor (Methodist)
- 26 December:** St John the Evangelist LEP (Anglican/Baptist/Methodist/URC), Kingston Park;
Revd Adele Moorhouse (Methodist) and Revd Annie Gray (Anglican)

Vacancy News

In order for the Group Elders move forward with the vacancy and form a joint pastorate, in line with Synod proposals, the following motion will be tabled at church meetings during December:

'This church meeting asks the officers and Elders of the East Cleveland Group to enter negotiations with a view to becoming a joint pastorate with Hartlepool URC, Billingham URC and Stockton URC, including Thornaby.'



Merry Christmas

Guisborough

Christmas, the beginning of Easter.

As a child, Christmas among other things was a time of shiny tinsel, balloons and paper decorations, pantomimes at the local club or a regional big theatre, carol singers on your doorstep waiting for payment so they would stop singing, a guaranteed screening of *The Wizard of Oz* on tv. A time when adults would try to argue less whilst consuming more alcohol, which is a challenge in any decade never mind back in the 70's. Crackers, turkey and The Queen's speech at 3pm were quite a big thing back then. Hurting your teeth when you found a shilling [5p to those post decimalisation] in your Christmas pudding. "I've kept the receipt in case you need to change it" was also quite a common saying.

Peace on earth and goodwill towards men had to last the full 12 days of Christmas and help see in 'The New Year'. After that, as like now, January heralded the time of sales, exchanges, wet weather and utility bills.

The commercial Christmas seemed to be preached far more than the faith based biblical Christmas in the surroundings of my upbringing. It was just the way it was, tradition.

I may have mentioned this before to some of you reading this, that, to me now as an adult believer, Christmas is the start of Easter. Would we celebrate Christmas if there was no Easter?

When we think or look at a nativity scene or the story of Christmas, how many things can we see that relate or point to Easter?

That innocent babe in the manger, who was to be known as Emmanuel [God with us] remaining innocent and sinless until the day when that innocence would be the price paid for the sins of the world. A spotless little lamb.

A leader, a Lord, a prince, a king, God in the form of a new-born child. A vessel of God's forgiveness wrapped in swaddling clothes.

This fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham, this realisation of the sayings spoken by the prophets of old, this hope of a nation and the entire world of sinful man, born surrounded by animals taking shelter and first worshipped by lowly shepherds who had come to see The Great Shepherd, The Lamb of

God, The Lion of the tribe of Judah., the chosen one who would save his people, thus initiating the Kingdom of God and the Messianic Age on earth.

I often liken ‘The Star’ that guided the ‘wise men’ with the cross of Calvary. The first, a sign that heralds God’s chosen one has come to His people, the second a sign or symbol that brings all peoples back to God. Both are signs marking the birth of something new, a new covenant between God and man. God is creating a new thing, look it is here already. Gentiles as well as the tribes of Israel called into the presence of The Living God.

The Magi from the east with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh signifying royalty and burial, indications of this new babe’s destiny. Again, a scene depicting gentiles searching, finding and worshipping The King of The Jews, the same words inscribed on the cross showing why Jesus had been crucified.

The Womb and the tomb bringing forth new life, one birth which leads to a second birth. To be saved we must be born again, to be born again we must first be born. The Easter resurrection of the babe born on Christmas day showing us the way.

Bethlehem or in Hebrew ‘Bet Lehem’ meaning the House of Bread been the place where ‘The Bread of Life’ was born, was also the town where shepherds bred and raised the sheep & lambs to be used for sacrifice at the Temple in Jerusalem. Worthy is The Lamb that was slain.

The images or works of art that show mother with child, Mary holding her son. Which comes to mind for you first? The scene at Golgotha or the scene in the stable? Can you imagine one of them now without also unseeing the other one?

	Door	Vestry	Communion
5 Dec	Martin	Maureen	Jenny
12 Dec	Sandra	Joyce	
19 Dec	RJoyce	Barbara	
25 Dec	Peter	Ray	
2 Jan	Barbara	Jenny	
9 Jan	Darren	Martin	
16 Jan	Ray	Joyce	
23 Jan	Martin	Peter	
30 Jan	Sandra	Barbara	

The giving of gifts and charity. Christmas and Easter provide the greatest example of ‘a gift’ that is unmatched. One

which was freely given to help and make a way for mankind, pure love, God's love.

The greatest Christmas gift you can give to anyone is not only the story but the essence of Easter, the message of The Cross, The Gospel of Jesus, God's love for mankind. Easter is the reason for Christmas. Christmas is the beginning of the Easter story.

Christmas 2021, as the world focuses on promoting their agenda let us focus on ours. As the world preaches their truths let us preach, teach and live ours, by love, God's Love. May His Spirit move you.

Merry Christmas

DJT, Guisborough URC.

Redcar

Church Yard Clearance

On Monday 25 October 2021 a group of us got together to clear and clean up the church yard. It has not been touched for two years due to the pandemic. A skip was hired for the day so only we could fill it.

It was kindly paid for by The Rosa Mundi group. A massive thank you to them as the cost was £145.00. A cost the church would not be able to cover.

The help provided was amazing from the Scout leaders and the Rosa Mundi group. So I have to give them all a great big thank you as Andy and I could not have done any of it without them. I also have to thank Brian McSherry who came to help also.

Fantastic teamwork.

Thanks Dot

Condolences

It is with sadness that we report the death of Rita Roseborough, who was an Elder for several years. She recently went to live near one of her sons in Derbyshire. Please remember her family in your prayers.

June

St Andrew's

Toy Service

Our annual Toy Service is to be held on Sunday 12th December. The toys which are donated will be distributed to families in need in the local area by our friends from the Salvation Army.

Hopefully we will manage to collect as many toys this year as usual to make some Christmas magic.

Carol Service

Sunday 19th December

Do come along and join us for our service of Carols and Readings.

This will be followed by tea/coffee and mince pies.

All welcome

Middlesbrough Food Bank

We are once again collecting food items(tins, packets and toiletries) for Middlesbrough Food Bank. A collection box is placed in the entrance hall every Sunday. These donations will be taken to the Food Bank in early December so that they can be distributed before Christmas. It would be appreciated if some Christmas treats could be included.

Thank you.

Coffee for Charity

Sun 31st Oct. Middlesbrough Food Bank £32.00

Sun 7th Nov. Leprosy Mission £41.00

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Marton Methodist
Saturday 22nd January
12noon
Soup Lunch

St Bernadettes
Sunday 23rd January
6.30pm
United Service

Preachers

	Marton	Guisborough	Redcar
	10.00am	10.00am	11.00am
5 Dec	Jan Harper Church meeting	Revd Norma Johnson Communion	Pam Stenson
12 Dec	David Elliott Parade/Toy Service	Guis Folks Church meeting	Brian Stephenson Church meeting
19 Dec	Jan Harper Carols & Mince Pies	Revd Keith Martin	Rev Norma Johnson
25 Dec	— No Service	Dr Donna Moore All welcome	— No Service
26 Dec	— No Service	— No Service	Revd Jane Rowell All welcome
2 Jan	tba	Maranny Jones	Rev Norma Johnson Communion
9 Jan	tba Parade	Revd Bill Middlemiss	Jan Harper

Remaining services for January to be confirmed

Material for the February Magazine to church editors by Sunday 16 January
please

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