

Group News



*February * 2013 * February*

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

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Minister

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Dear Friends,

One month into the New Year! By now we are used to writing *13* instead of *12*. So we've almost forgotten the New Year resolutions that we set out into the New Year with!?! We have forgotten about the changes that we thought we were going to make as we looked forward to 2013! Instead, we have settled rather well into the present moment of 2013, and now feel quite comfortable with the New Year, which is now not so new after all. So gone is the opportunity for thinking differently about things, for taking on the challenge of making changes!

What a shame - because that feeling of being ready to embrace new times is one which we need to keep hold of. Don't we always need to be ready to roll with the changes that, after all, don't ever stop coming into our lives from the moment we are born to the moment we leave this life for our heavenly rest, or is it heavenly partying? For as we know, nothing really ever stays the same! Things are always changing, always developing. If things didn't change, we would still live in caves and be hunter gatherers. If they didn't change, well we wouldn't have all the technological inventions, like microwaves, air-fryers, hybrid cars, or electric toothbrushes! If things didn't change, then we wouldn't now have cures for so many kinds of cancers, or vaccines that have virtually eliminated in some cases, in others vastly reduced, diseases that, only decades ago, were major killers across the world.

And think again, if things didn't change, we wouldn't have the church, just a disparate group of Jesus' followers who had run away at Jesus' arrest, after denying that they ever knew Jesus! Or the few believers would have remained in their houses too afraid to encounter the Holy Spirit and allow God to transform their lives?! And where would the church have gone on to from there?

Change - it is a good thing really. Even if it is a real challenge!! I know how hard it is for most of us to live in this rapidly changing world, where we struggle to climb to the crest of learning how to

email / use our mobile phone / set the clock on the microwave etc, and we just achieve it when the next challenge confronts us, the next form of communicating emerges - Skype / Facebook / Twitter; or the microwave breaks and the new one has a whole different set of challenges, and now it grills too?!?!? And it is great, so much better than the old one – that is if we can just find out how to switch it on!

It is all like climbing a very steep hill and appearing to reach the top, only to realise that it is a false summit! We think we have got there, caught upon some of the changes, e.g. just got our head around the fact that you don't have to lick postage stamps anymore - when the goal posts are raised, knocked down, or removed altogether, and the mountain rises above us again, with a beautiful but sinister peak, challenging us to dare to climb it! And so we struggle again mastering the next change!

Things need to continue to change in our churches, in our Group, in our Synod, ecumenically - and we rise to the challenge of doing things differently, with less members, less resources, etc. But at times as we climb our mountains we also have to stop to take in the view and see just how well we are actually doing, look back and see just how far we have come. I would like to be the first to congratulate everyone in our churches for how well we have all coped with going from two ministers down to one. And coped is probably the wrong word, because you have more than coped. You have put on the cramp-ons and got on, making changes, growing in leadership skills, chairing meetings, making effective decisions on how now to be the East Cleveland Group. Our elders are growing closer together with the quarterly Group Elders meetings, and the trust and communication between our churches is only going to grow under such arrangements. Well done – although it hasn't been easy!

But thank you for your commitment to accept the necessary changes, to rise to the challenges. With this positivity I am very excited to see what else God is going to be doing through us all

across the East Cleveland Group in reward for our faithfulness to God. These are exciting times too, as change brings anticipation of more new things!

Rev Catey Morrison

Manse Prayers

Join Ken, Dorothy, Norma and myself for a time of prayer and bible reading at 31, Oakley Close, Guisborough every Tuesday at 8.30am. All welcome.

FAF Club News!

A massive thank you to the FAF Club, who along with extra, younger cast members, took the Britain's Got Talent Style Nativity Service (yes you had to see it to believe it!) they had prepared 'on tour' round all four churches in the Group in the run up to Christmas! The hard work put into preparing the 'Nativity on Tour' certainly showed, as everyone played their part in this creative production.

Although snow prevented the young people from meeting in January, snow permitting FAF Club will meet again on 17th February (contact Catey for details or a lift) and, along with all the normal fun, fellowship, food and games, the young people will this year be using the biblically grounded 'Youth Essence' course to take a deeper look at what makes them who they are, and how their beliefs and faith are at the very heart of who they are, in fact are the essence of who they are.

Ancient

Where can any of us escape from his mighty hand? What world will receive anyone who deserts from his service?

Clement of Rome Bishop of Rome 1st Century

Synod Prayers

This year's Prayer Diary takes as its theme the United Reformed Church's Vision 2020 mission strategy, focusing on each of the 10 statements during the year. This month the theme is Spirituality and Prayer.

3rd February Spring Retreat at Ampleforth Abbey, near York, this week

10th February All who play a part in leading worship; Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner Mrs Jan Harper

17th February St Cuthbert's Centre, Holy Island; its visitors and its management team; Warden Revd Rachel Poolman

24th February Those exploring vocations, student ministers, Training for Learning & Serving students; Synod TLS Coordinator Mrs Chris Eddowes

Prayers for the IPM Church in Mozambique:

This month pray for the seven parishes of the Central Presbytery, which covers the three provinces of Sofala, Manica and Tete. The IPM has only been permitted to work in this area since independence: some parishes contain many worship centres, but only four ordained ministers cover the whole area.

Special meeting for Church Treasurers and Elders within the Group!!!

A meeting has been arranged for Saturday March 2nd to organise how we pay our Maintenance of the Ministry payments!!! To make this meeting a success every church needs to send its Church Treasurer and one elder to this morning meeting.

News from the Persecuted Church

The Gospel continues to spread in Iran despite the threat of arrest faced by those who accept Christ. The country's media has acknowledged growth in the number of Christians; a report in a government-backed newspaper stated that 200 house churches, made up of Christians from Muslim backgrounds, are now meeting in Mashad. A senior Islamic cleric quoted in a local newspaper, also warned against the spread of Christianity. He said that 600 people have become Christians in Neishabour alone. Praise the Lord for these many brothers and sisters in Christ, and pray that He will protect them from the pressures and risks that accompany faith in Christ in Iran.

(From the Barnabus Fund Prayer diary)

We are asked to pray for the persecutors of Christians at the start of the year. In particular pray for the prison guards where Pastor Benham Irani is in jail in Iran, that they will stop beating him, and that they will be convicted of their wrongdoing.

(From the Christian Solidarity Worldwide Prayer diary)

Traidcraft Shop Success!:

Despite the economic squeeze, Jenny Medhust reports takings of £27,500 over the four weeks before Christmas that her shop was open in Captain Cook Square. Not a record, but an amazing amount still! Northern Synod helps Jenny each year by providing a start-up loan that enable her to keep the shop stocked over those busy weeks.



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

Group News Request – again!

Catey is still interested in hearing from volunteers from all four churches who are prepared to occasionally write the letter for the front of the Group News Magazine to give Catey a break now and then. Everyone surely has something interesting to say, and a little wisdom picked up across the year, and this is now your chance to share your thoughts on seasonal or biblical subjects to enlighten us all. Please speak to Catey (01287651926) if you are interested in writing the introductory letter on an occasional basis.

Guisborough

This newsletter covers a gap of rather daunting. Those who attended found it very helpful. There were readings, prayers, some Taize chants and a time for silent reflection. The commercialisation and sentimentality of Christmas has got completely out of hand over the last 30 – 40 years and it takes real effort to maintain a balanced approach to the wonderful central belief of God becoming man which, sadly, for most people has been lost.

Two months since the last issue covered December and January. Though there are good reasons why the winter edition covers two months, the downside is the difficulty in capturing the events of this busy time. We had a number of moving services in our celebration of Christmas and for me the best was the Advent Service where our children were joined by other young people from the Group in an imaginative alternative presentation of the Christmas story. On Christmas Eve Donna led an alternative Christmas service aimed at those of us who find many aspects of the ‘festive season’

Forced to watch television over the Christmas holiday (!!), I was struck by the frequent adverts for the services of slimming clubs (a growth industry in the UK!), interspersed by the ad-

Guisborough Calendar

Wed 6 th Feb	2.30pm	Prayers at 1 Nidderdale, Skelton
Tue 12 th Feb	7.30pm	Churches Together Lent Launch, with pancakes!
Tue 19 th Feb	2.30pm	Belmont View service. Please support if you can.

Weekly

Thursdays 10.00am – 11.45am	Market Day Coffee Morning
Thursdays 11.30am	Quiet Time – prayers and reflections with Catey, Ken, Norma and others.

verts by some key charities such as Save the Children seeking funds to prevent the deaths by starvation of over a million children every year. How can we tolerate a society with so much selfishness and over indulgence at Christmas when so many are starving to death, particularly in Africa?

Christmas now behind us, we enter a New Year of challenges, opportunity, excitement and change. One of our church's themes last year (again) was our concern about the decline in church attendance, both in our own church and generally. This isn't a new problem; it has been there throughout my lifetime, so

clearly there are no easy solutions. One aspect of this is the difficulty we all face in embracing change, doing things differently, sometimes thinking differently. Another important aspect, in my view, is that we need to be sure what it is we actually believe before we can share it with others. In 2012 Catey, through many of her services, encouraged and challenged us with ideas and questions to think about: the need to be receptive to new messages from God; how do we answer the question 'what makes us different as Christians?'

On a personal level I have also been challenged by some books

Guisborough Rotas

	Vestry	Communion	Door	Flowers
Feb 3rd	J Basham	M Houston	D Beattie	D Collins
Feb 10th	B Ward		M Ward	D Moore
Feb 17th	M Burrows		R Tunnicliffe	Hilary Tucker
Feb 24th	P Ewell		D Cross	D Cross
Mar 3rd	D Beattie	D Houston	J Basham	D Kane

I have read in 2012. Two in particular which I enjoyed are Richard Holloway ‘Doubts and Loves’ and Robin Lane Fox ‘Truth and Fiction in the Bible’. Richard Holloway, sometime head of the Scottish Episcopalian Church, gives an honest view of his own beliefs and doubts. Robin Lane Fox, an Oxford historian, brings us up to date on what modern scholarship, based on archaeology and studies



of recent new scripts, tells us about the Bible. I found the parts on the Old Testament particularly enlightening. Though not everyone will agree with some parts of these books, at least they helped me to think about some of the challenges of Christian faith in new ways.

James Robertson

Modern

The remarkable thing about the way in which people talk about God or about their relation to God, is that it seems to escape them completely that God hears what they are saying.

Søren Kierkegaard Danish Philosopher and theologian 19th Century

Redcar

Redcar Prayer Pointers

Prayers for the week beginning...

4th February – Pray for all those who are ill at this time, or have struggled with ill-health over the recent weeks.

11th February- Pray for ongoing funding for Redcar Survivors of Domestic Abuse, that they might be able to continue their good work from our buildings, and even extend their work to assist more women in danger.

18th February – Pray for the buildings to be used more fully by the community, and for our efforts as a church to bridge the gap between the community and the church.

25th February – Pray for fresh inspiration of what where we should be going over this coming year, in terms of our own faith and spiritual development.

Redcar Calendar

Tue 5 th Feb	2.00pm	Craft and Chatter
Tue 19 th Feb	2.00pm	Welcome at Wins
Wed 27 th Feb	1.30pm	Elders Meeting at Cath Milburn's
Fri 1 st Mar	2.00pm	Women's World Day of Prayer Service hosted by our church.

Weekly

Thursday	9.30am	Prayers
	10.00-11.30am	Pop-in Centre

Lingdale

Book Club

The next meeting will be on 5th February at 7pm when we will be discussing *Drood* by Dan Simmons. A novel about a secret manuscript by Charles Dickens' friend and some-time collaborator, Wilkie Collins, sealed for 125 years. It reveals the dark secret that obsessed both men – a secret that not only ended their long friendship, but also brought each writer to the very brink of murder.

Annual General Meeting

This will be held on 10th April at 7pm in the Church.

Flower Rota

3rd February – Mr A Thompson
10th February – Mrs M Saunders
17th February – Mr T Waller
(in memory of Miss J Scarth and Mrs B Waller)
24th February – Mr T Waller
3rd March – Mrs J Scott



acidanthera

Lingdale Calendar

Weekly

Tuesday	10.00am – 10.30am	Prayers for our Community
	10.30am – 11.30am	Community Café
3 rd Sunday of the month	5.30pm	Family Service followed by a Youth Meeting at the Manse

Lingdale Prayer Pointers

- 4th February – Pray for all in the village who have struggled with ill health over the winter months, and all who are ill at this time.
- 11th February - Pray for inspiration for what we should be focusing on most in this coming year, in order to help faith grow in the our community, and in terms of our own faith and spiritual development.
- 18th February – Pray for our efforts to foster even better relationships with other active groups in the community, the school, Lingdale Liftoff, and St. Chad’s, that we might be a fully rounded faith filled community.
- 25th February – Pray for those on your street who are in need in any way, and seek guidance from God as to your part in helping to answer that prayer.



Pancake Quiz Evening. Friday 15th February, 7pm

Everybody is warmly invited along to celebrate the start of Lent with pancakes and quizzes and a good time for all.

Craft and Conversation Social Afternoon

Anyone interested in socialising over a cuppa is welcome to bring their knitting, sewing, embroidery, card making, paints or just themselves for a lovely afternoon together every second Wednesday from 1.30 to 3.30pm. Tea and coffee is provided, as well as jigsaws and other games. This month to be held on 13th and 27th February and every two weeks from there on. Everybody welcome!!

St Andrew's

Fundraising

The Annual Bazaar held on 17th Nov. 2012 raised £443.86 for church funds.

The Christmas Social held on 11th Dec.212 raised £60.00 for the Rosemary Fund.

Many thanks to everyone who made these events successful.

Ladies Fellowship

The next meeting of the Ladies Fellowship will be on Wednesday 6th February 2013, starting at 7.30pm. when Mr Sotheran will be giving a talk.

All welcome.



Help Needed

The Voluntary Service at James Cook University Hospital is urgently in need of volunteers for their Coffee Lounge. If anyone can spare a few hours of their time could they please telephone 01642 854886. It would be really appreciated.

Coffee for Charity

18th Nov	Teesside Hospice	£20.00
2nd Dec	Leprosy Mission	£20.00
9th Dec	Boy's Brigade	£18.70
16th Dec	Rosemary Fund	£17.00
23rd Dec	Zoe's Place	£23.50
30th Dec	Rosemary Fund	£20.00
6th Jan	Elmridge	£25.00

Flower List

There are still several vacancies on the Flower List which is on the notice board. Anyone who is interested will they please add their name as soon as possible. Thank you.

Kirkley Lodge

The monthly worship service held at Kirkley Lodge will now be held on the fourth Wednesday in each month, following on after the Knit and Knatter. This month it will be held on Wednesday 27th February at 2.30pm in the Upstairs lounge. All are welcome to join in this extension of the worship of our church community.

Friday 1st March, 2.00pm

Women's World Day of Prayer

United Service hosted by our church

Preacher - Rev Meg Robb

St Andrew's Calendar

Wed 27th Feb	1.00-3.00pm	Knit and Natter
	2.30pm	Kirkley Lodge Service
Sun 3 rd Mar		Annual General Meeting

Weekly

Wednesday	9.30am	Midweek Informal Worship & Prayers – All welcome
Sunday	After Worship	Traid Craft Stall (Last Sunday in month)
Boys Brigade		Details available from ministers and church elders

Preachers for February 2013

Preachers

	3-Feb	10-Feb	17-Feb	24-Feb	3-Mar
Marton	10.00am J Harper	C Morrison Parade	N Johnson Communion	J Harper	C Morrison AGM
Guisbo	9.30am C Morrison Communion		C Morrison		K Harris Communion
Redcar	11.00am K Harris	N Johnson	J Harper	D Moore	N Johnson Communion
Lingdale	5.30pm C Morrison	K Harris Communion	C Morrison	K Harris	C Morrison

Material for the March Magazine to church editors by Sunday 10th February please
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