

Group News



** 2014 * February * 2014 **

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

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Minister

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Dear Friends,

As we enter February it can feel as if Christmas, and all the excitement of celebrating Jesus' entry into our world to challenge, to heal, to rebuke, to comfort, to welcome and to redeem, was a long time ago. And the reality is that yes it was a while back now, but as one of our church members commented recently, it shouldn't feel like a long time ago. Why? Because "the joy and peace of Christmas is something which remains in our lives every day." And they are right aren't they, for isn't this what being a Christian is all about? This is the gift to us from Christ Jesus which remains in our lives long after the secular festivities and the Church's celebrations have ended. Do you still feel that peace in your life for which the Christ-Child came into our world? And does the world even know it yet?

We may feel that Christ has thus far failed in his task of bringing peace to our world - what with all the wars and conflicts that continue to take place every day around the world! We have only needed to glance at our television screens this New Year to see where this is not the case. The New Year has brought terrible times for the Central African Republic and The Sudan, as well as ongoing nightmares for the people of Syria inside the country and the several million huddled in refugee camps on the edges of the country with the nations that border Syria. But we must remember that our country is not perfect either in terms of peaceful communities and neighbourly relations.

The reality is that for peace to come to our world it has to begin with us, as individuals. But now there are over 7 billion of us, 7 billion individuals in our world, that is a lot of people like us who need to get on with each other. But I want to begin with us, with the hundred and more of us in our churches in the East Cleveland Group. And what I would like to do is to take us all back to the events of Christmas, to the Christmas tree in the lounge, and the tinsel hanging on the mantelpiece, and now I want you to look again, in your mind, under the tree to the gifts that are there. But I

want you to look now for the gifts that Christ wanted you to have this last Christmas, the gifts that Jesus wants you to have in your life at this time. And prayerfully open them. Then, when you have prayerfully realised what Christ wants you to have and to know, I want you to keep hold of those presents and not put them back under the tree again. For we wouldn't give our Christmas gifts back, and neither should we try to give back what Christ wants to give us right now, and that includes the peace that he gives to us all, that he wants us all to know in our lives each and every day.

I do hope that you can do that mental prayerful exercise when you have a quiet moment, for the next challenge is coming in the form of Lent, as we learn how to live out our lives in tune with Christ's and discover for ourselves how to live out our faith even in the most trying of times.

With all God's blessings!

Rev Catey Morrison

Sabbatical Presentations

Catey is going to be beginning her multi-media presentations reflecting on her sabbatical and the learning which she gained about the Bible during her time off last year. The series of three presentations, beginning with the Old Testament, followed by a presentation on the Life of Jesus, before finally a presentation looking at where the Good News went on from there, are going to be presented within the context of the normal services of worship, being given once in each of the churches in the Group. The first of these special services will be held at St. Andrew's on 8th February.

Please see the preaching plan for when these special services are going to be held. If you miss the one at your church you may like to catch it another of the churches within the Group.

Synod Prayers

Synod Prayers this year takes a tour of the Synod, remembering our Churches and ministers. The last Sunday of each month is set aside to pray for ecumenical partners in our region and our partner church, the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique (PCM).

February

2nd Spring Retreat at Shepherd's Dene, near Riding Mill, this week: Children's & Youth Work Group; Convenor Sandy Ogilvie

9th Trinity LEP, Bedlington; Rev Heegon Moon; Christ Church LEP, North Broomhill; Revd Lynda Coulthard

16th West End; Jesmond; Robert Stewart Memorial, Newcastle; Rev Meg Robb; Church-Related Community Worker Ms Ann Honey

23rd Fairtrade Fortnight

PCM: The four Presbyterian Societies: Men's, Women's, Youth, and Activists (*young marrieds*) – their leaders and executive members, and the work of the Societies in each parish; Bishop of Newcastle Rt Rev Martin Wharton; Assistant Bishop Rt Rev Frank White

Synod

The next Northern Synod meeting is to be held on Saturday 15th March at St. Andrew's URC, Monkseaton. Would church representatives please contact Catey if they need a lift.

Prayer Pointers for February

3rd February - Pray for hope for our communities and for our country and for the world, that this year might be the year when peace will take hold in places where there has been real difficulties and conflicts in the past, and that violence will be replaced by co-operation amongst individuals.

10th February - Pray for all those facing medical treatment this month and particularly those who have difficult decisions to make as to which path of treatment to take. Lord, we give thanks that there is so much medical knowledge and expertise available to us in our country. We pray for those who have so little available to them.

17th February - Pray for all those who are suffering due to a miscarriage of justice, including those in the prisons of our country. Pray also for those who are the used ones in our world, used to carry drugs through airports, entrapped in sex-trafficking trade. We pray especially for all those who are imprisoned by circumstances which are beyond their own doing.

24th February - Pray that we might enjoy spotting the first signs of spring which announce to us all that the cycle of creation is returning amidst the cold winter weather. Pray for those who have been suffering in the darkness of winter, particularly those who have struggled to keep themselves and their families warm due to poverty in our communities.

Manse Prayers

Manse prayers are happening again at Ken Harris' house every Tuesday morning at 8.30am. Everyone is warmly welcome to join in where we read through the lectionary readings for the following Sunday and begin to think through their meaning for us in our lives. This is followed by a time of quiet prayer.

News from the Persecuted Church

As the New Year develops, give thanks to the Lord for all the spiritual hope and practical aid that He has brought to His persecuted people during 2013 through the ministry of Barnabus fund. Pray for our work in the coming months of 2014 as we continue to respond to the urgent and desperate needs of so many suffering Christians in many parts of the world. Pray for wisdom, courage and endurance for all our partners on the ground as they serve their brothers and sisters so faithfully in Christ's name. And pray for persecuted Christians everywhere that they may find strength and peace in the Lord

From the Barnabus Fund Prayer Diary www.barnabusfund.org

In Egypt ask God to give courage to Christians, enabling them to rebuild their lives after over 130 churches and homes, businesses and establishments were attacked and destroyed.

From the Christian Solidarity Worldwide Prayer diary; www.csw.org.uk

Wanted

Are you doing any Spring cleaning? Are you going through boxes and drawers sorting out stuff you have acquired over the years? Are you discovering things you thought you had thrown out years ago?

If you find any jewellery you no longer wear, maybe it's too bright, too tarnished, no longer your style, single earrings, necklaces with broken clasps, brooches with faulty pins, watches, perhaps foreign coins, banknotes etc. please don't put them in the bin!! They could be put to good use in raising funds for Traidcraft.

I have envelopes for you to take home and fill in the coming weeks or months and then hand back to me at any time. Please ask.

Jane Tomlin (St Andrews)

Youth Assembly

Two of our young people, Jade Moodie and Joshua Morrison, will have been to our Church's National Youth Assembly by the time you read this Group News. We look forward to reading their report next month about their trip to Alrewas for FURY (Fellowship of United Reformed Youth) Assembly which was held on 24th-26th January, with debates, resolutions and plenty of fun I am sure!

December - January Fun Quiz Solutions

Acquire: *A group of people who sing together, a choir*

Bigamy *A large girl called Amy*

Dogma *The mother of a dog - a bitch*

Endorse *The last horse (in a race?)*

Exact *A performer who uses eggs (an egg juggler)*

Foreign *Something for use in rain (an umbrella)*

Forest *A chair or seat, more particularly a bench at a beauty spot*

Handicraft *A boat that is ready to jump into*

Hurricane *A cane used to make people move faster*

Laboratory Typically a function at which it doesn't matter whether you are a labour or conservative supporter

Liabile Able to tell lies

Mandate A girl agreeing to meet a man

Manicured A doctor's ex-patient

Minimum A very small mother

Palliasse A friendly donkey

Pantry A tree decorated with pans or a tree on which pans grow

Scintillate After eight you should stop sinning

Selfish The job of a fishmonger

Shosmith Telling Smith to go away

Superficial A huge fish like a whale

Syrup Stop slouching in your seat

Tandem What the sun does to sun-bathers

Winsome And lose some --- that's life

Guisborough

By the time you read this the days will be lengthening and anticipation of Spring will be growing. As I write the UK has experienced a succession of stormy wet low pressure weather fronts for several weeks and the daylight hours are short and it all seems a little depressing. Christmas is behind us, which for many people is a relief.

Perhaps the Church puts too much emphasis on Christmas. Unlike Easter Christmas was not celebrated by the earliest Christian. It began to be observed in the late 3rd century AD as an alternative to pagan winter holidays. The first evidence of its observance is in Rome in 336 AD. The earliest Christians do not appear to have commemorated the nativity, but only the baptism and resurrection of Christ and the deaths of the martyrs. Some early Christians, notably Origen of Alexandria strongly opposed the celebration of Christ's birth, pointing out that only Pharaoh and Herod celebrate their birthdays in the bible. It was only in 273 AD that Western Christians decided on December 25 to celebrate the birth of Jesus. This probably arose from a desire to provide an alternative to the Roman birthday of the 'unconquered sun' and the Persian birthday of Mithras, both of which were celebrated close to the winter solstice. Other aspects of Christmas also owe their origins to pagan celebrations, the tree, gift-giving, and lights. The Christian appropriation of these pagan customs would have been regarded positively as a victory for Christ over paganism. But some 1700 years later is paganism winning? Lights have increased (particularly the outdoor type), the length of the celebration has been increased from a day or two to several weeks, and the commercial aspect is growing exponentially, and the Christmas profits of the big retail stores is now the major factor in determining the strength of the economy.

We enjoyed the usual traditional services in the Guisborough

him to understand the world more clearly. We all need to get the balance right between action and reflection. With so many distractions, it is easy to forget to pause and take stock. Be it through contemplation, prayer, or even keeping a diary, many have found the practice of quiet personal reflection surprisingly rewarding, even discovering greater spiritual depth to their lives.’ Food for thought, even though it’s a sad sign of growing old when one listens to the Queen’s speech!

I still reflect sometimes on a question Catey posed one of her sermons probably a year ago. ‘What is it that we do as Christians that makes us different? What do we, as individuals, do differently because we are Christians?’ (I may have paraphrased a little.) At the time there were only a few brave attempts at answers from the congregation, perhaps mainly to fill what otherwise might have been silence. But it surely remains a key question for us to ponder both as individuals and as an organisation. Collectively, as an organisation, the Guisborough church has four main activities which impact on the outside world: Sunday school, services at Belmont View, Thursday coffee mornings, and support, mainly financial, for Guisborough Bridge. They all have an impact out in the community and we can take some pride in that.

With Christmas behind we now look forward to Easter, our main celebration.

James Robertson

Guisborough Rotas

	Vestry	Communion	Door	Flowers
2nd Feb	J Basham	M Houston	M Ward	D Collins
9th Feb	B Ward		D Moore	C Robertson
16th Feb	M Burrows		R Tunnicliffe	D Moore
23th Feb	P Etwell		D Cross	D Cross
2nd Mar	D Beattie	D Houston	J Basham	D Kane

Redcar

'Tuned In'

On Wednesday, 19th February we will be meeting at 'Tuned In' at 12.30pm for a light lunch to discuss future events to be held in our Church for fundraising. Everyone is welcome – all ideas will be gratefully received!! Hope to see you there!

Commitment for Life

Commitment for Life envelopes for Israel and the Occupied Territories envelopes will be available on the 2nd and 9th February.

FairTrade Fortnight Coffee at Redcar

Redcar is having a selection of FairTrade products available for sale on Sunday 23rd February, 12 noon after the service.

FairTrade coffee and tea and cakes will also be available.

Come to support FairTrade Fortnight and for all your fairly-traded needs!

Redcar Calendar

Tue 4th Feb 2.00pm Craft and Chatter

Wed 12th Feb 1.00pm Elders meeting at the home of Catherine Milburn

Tue 18th Feb 2.00pm Welcome at Wins

Weekly

Wednesdays 11.00am Singing Group in the Church

Thursday 9.30am Prayers

10.00-11.30am Pop-in Centre

Bible Study at the home of Catherine Milburn.

A possible pilgrimage from Ancient Times?

In this first 'Group News' of 2014 I wish the Church members a 'Happy New Year' a month after most of these greetings have been exchanged.

Years ago I was puzzled by the words 'Ne'er' spoken by such characters as 'Oor Wullie' and 'The Broons.' Then finally the penny dropped, just a 'W', a 'Y' and an 'A' missing!

Repeated television programmes may have irritated us during the holiday period but one repeated programme encouraged me in the writing of this article. It was Tony Robinson's historical walk Wiltshire which gave me my title.

His walk concerned the Neolithic Stone Age, an early civilisation which existed as people were slowly changing from being hunter-gatherers into being farmers where a knowledge of the changing lengths of daylight during a year were becoming important.

To mark the solstice, ritualistic pilgrimages may well have taken place especially as writing had not developed. The winter solstice, when the sun seemed to stand still at its lowest noon-altitude was the most important, for until this altered, lengthening the day and so increasing the warmth, crops could not begin to sprout from seeds.

So from what seemed dead, new life came and this of course linked up with the human wish and hope of a new and eternal life which is now our Christian Hope.

Did such a pilgrimage taken by Tony Robinson in one day and possibly used by Neolithic people just in their minds, strengthen their sun as it slowly increased its altitude in the time we call 'New Year?'

Were the journey's magical ones, comparable to a theory about the

art hidden in dark caves? Here the animal carefully drawn hopefully would appear in reality for the hunter in days to come.

The impressive ruin of Stonehenge was seen as the final goal of the traveller as the shortest day ended.

Other markers along the journey remain only as traces buried in the ground such as the post holes for Wood-henge which was reconstructed in recent years.

Durrington Walls are the traces of stone houses apparently used by the builders of Stonehenge and there could have been five thousand of them working for many decades.

The River Avon also points the way as does a track way which dips into a hollow before rising to give a spectacular view of Stonehenge.

The programme suggested that the yearly pilgrimage would be a fixed memory, as Christmas and Easter were to uneducated Christians of early times.

Labyrinths to be walked, in or near some Churches, allow people to think about their past sins or achievements as they repent and give thanks to God. These are becoming more common.

A church in Saltburn makes one each summer on the beach and a more permanent one exists at Wydale Hall near Scarborough.

Yet the activities at Stonehenge are mainly at the summer solstice – sunrise where as they should be, according to the programme, at the winter solstice - sunset. For the remains of ash burials have been found there again, according to Tony Robinson perhaps carried along the Wiltshire pilgrims' way long ago.

Yet it was all done in the belief of a new life after this one.

John Crowther

Lingdale

Book Club

The next meeting will be on 4th February at 7pm when we will be discussing *Septucre* by Kate Mosse.

Flower Rota

2nd February – Mrs P Green
9th February – Mrs H Dunstan
16th February – Mrs P Griffiths
23rd February – Miss S Griffiths
2nd March – Mrs J Coulthard

Craft & Conversation

5th and 19th February
1.30pm – 3.30pm

The group now has six regular members (although more are welcome) with others popping in occasionally. They have produced over 100 items so far for the special care baby unit at James Cook University hospital including 40 blankets and 40 hats for premature babies.

Community Café

10.30 – 12.00
every Tuesday

The Community Café is now also a distribution point for the Redcar & East Cleveland Food Bank.

Volunteers are needed, as are donations of tinned/packet foods – please call in for further information.

Lingdale Calendar

Thu 27th Feb 7.00pm Church Meeting at The Manse.

Weekly

Tuesday 10.00am – 10.30am Prayers for our Community
10.30am – 12noon Community Café

Foodbank Distribution Point

Lingdale church has opened its doors to the Redcar Area Foodbank, becoming a distribution point for those needing to pick up their Foodbank parcel. From the beginning of January clients have been able to receive a warm welcome, a cup of coffee and cake, or a hot soup lunch, whilst their food voucher is processed on a Tuesday morning from 10.30am - 12noon. After being in existence for just 12 months, this is the sixth distribution centre which has been set up by the Redcar Area Foodbank, and over 2000 people have needed to receive emergency food in that time. It is great that our Lingdale church is able to play their part in responding to this need. If you would like to volunteer in the kitchen, as a bag packer, or as a welcomer, please speak to Catey (01287 651926).

FAF Club

The FAF club will be happening on the fourth Sunday in the month during February and March (I.e. 23rd February and 23rd March) and will meet at 5.15pm in order to join in with the Sabbatical Presentations at our Lingdale Church.

There will be plenty of opportunity for the young people to discuss the subject matter over food afterwards at the manse. There will also be the normal opportunity for games as well!!! FAF Club will still finish at 8.30pm as usual to allow for this. (Please contact Catey for further information.)

Modern

I think I am the only person who was actually converted at his own confirmation service.

Robert Runcie Archbishop of Canterbury (late 20th century)

St Andrew's

Flower List

There are still a few empty places left on the 2014 Flower List. If anyone is interested please add their name to the list which is on the notice board.

Christmas Social

Our Christmas Social on the 11th December 2013 raised £37.00 for the Leprosy Mission. Although a few less people attended this event, those who were there enjoyed our Christmas get together.

Ladies' Fellowship

The Ladies' Fellowship met on Tues. 14th January when we had a very interesting slide show and talk from Rob and Margaret Nightingale about the work of Smile.

Our next meeting will be at St Andrew's on Tuesday 11th February 1.30pm to 3.00pm when our speaker will be Pat Martin. All welcome.

Knit 'n' Natter

The next Knit 'n' Natter will be at St Andrews on Wednesday 26th February. 1.00pm to 3.00p.m. Please do come along and join us.

St Andrew's Calendar

Weekly

Sunday	After Worship	Traid Craft Stall (Last Sunday in month)
Boys Brigade		Details available from ministers and church elders

Does God have a sense of humour?

Aware that a party from Stockton Baptist Tabernacle were travelling to Uganda last summer, I approached the leader to ask if he would carry a small parcel for Rosemary, the partner St. Andrews supports. Unable to deliver in person he left it at the office of the

Guiding Light School where they were staying. A week later when Rosemary was able to get a vehicle to the Kampala suburb, she resolved to collect the mystery parcel. That day the tropical rains were so torrential they could not reach the school so she completed the last few hundred yards on foot. Imagine the driver's reaction when she returned from the muddy walk wearing a brand new waterproof jacket with comments about - does God guide your friend when it's going to rain in Uganda!?!?!?

A big "THANK YOU"

The annual transfer of funds has been made to Rosemary, St. Andrew's partner in Jinja, Uganda. The amount of £498.26 was made up as follows:-

Proceeds from Sunday morning coffees during 2013 - £121.20

Direct giving/personal donations/sponsorship - £377.06

Sincere thanks to all who contributed in anyway.

Shirley Moore

Shirley Moore

Coffee for Charity

8th Dec	Boys' Brigade	£26.00
15th Dec	Zoe's Place	£15.25
22nd Dec	RNLI	£21.00
29th Dec	Larchfield Com	£12.00
5th Jan	Barnardos	£16.65

Fundraising

The annual Bazaar held on 16th November 2013 raised £423.26 for church funds.

Fred Rowe (1928-2013)

There was a congregation of about sixty of us gathered at Trinity Methodist Church, Whinney Banks for the funeral of Fred Rowe on 31 December 2013 with Revd Martin Ramsden officiating. His three sons and their families were present, their only daughter having died some years ago.

Fred had been member of Park Presbyterian and of Linthorpe for more than 50 years, until 2011 when he joined his wife Pauline at Trinity where she played the organ.

Fred was born in Runcorn in a very modest home and his natural ability, hard graft and encouragement enabled him to get to the Grammar School and then to St. Andrews University where he took a degree in Chemistry. He was working towards his PhD when at the outbreak of war he was called up into a reserved occupation with ICI at their weapons division in Scotland. After the War, Fred and Pauline moved to their large welcoming house in Cambridge Road as Fred joined the Research Team at ICI Billingham.

Music was always one of his great interests. (Pauline taught music at Stainsby School) He was a lover of serious music which he understood well. He was an important member of the Linthorpe Church Choir for over 40 years, a reliable and intelligent tenor, who especially enjoyed Church music but also entered into the secular numbers at Concerts, with enthusiasm. He greatly encouraged their four children in their musical education and achievements.

He was serious too in his churchmanship and knew his Church history. As Martin said Fred was the one who asked the hard questions about matters of the faith and enjoyed a challenging discussion about serious issues.

The last year had been a difficult as with increasingly poor health, for which he refused further treatment, he managed on his own after Pauline's death in 2012. He was unable to do as much in the garden, which was another great interest. More than once he told Martin that he was ready to go. 'When the good Lord is ready for me' he said 'I am ready for Him'

Rest in peace.

Jane Tomlin

Preachers

	2-Feb	9-Feb	16-Feb	23-Feb	2-Mar
Marion	10.00am J Harper	C Morrison Sabbatical/Parade Communion	N Johnson	K Harris	K Harris
Guisbo	9.30am C Morrison Communion		M Johnson	C Morrison Sabbatical	C Morrison
Redcar	11.00am C Morrison Sabbatical	N Johnson	K Harris	J Harper	C Morrison Communion
Lingdale	5.30pm J Coulthard	C Morrison Communion	K Harris	C Morrison Sabbatical	J Coulthard

Material for the February Magazine to church editors by Sunday 9th February please
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