

Group News



**** 2019 * February * 2019 ****

The monthly magazine for:

Guisborough URC

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

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Greetings to everyone within the Group, wishing you all a truly happy and blessed new year.

Three of us from St Andrew's, Marton, took the opportunity before Christmas of attending Middlesbrough Churches Together at Oakwood Centre, so I offered to write this "front page" to attempt to share the experience with you all. Two similar events had been held in years past at Macmillan College but, once again, it was felt God was calling us together.

Christians Together in Middlesbrough and Cleveland, as its name suggests, draws together believers from many denominations – and none, from Salvation Army and Baptists to ethnic churches, Pentecostals, those whose vicars "wear frocks" (to coin a phrase), and everything in between, all of whom worship the Lord God. It was entirely appropriate therefore that we began with praise – words displayed on two huge screens, and led by an excellent band and lead singers. We sat or stood, raised our arms or not as we chose but, most importantly, we were **one** people united in heart and voice worshipping God.

During the evening we saw a video of challenges tackled and overcome when Christian people had the courage to put their differences behind them. Many public bodies, including government we were told, recognised the potential of church and were keen to work alongside, but had no central point to connect with. We heard a powerful mini-sermon based on Joshua when God required the dedication/consecration of all the people prior to crossing the Red Sea. Later we heard further encouragement from representatives of Youth for Christ working in Tees Valley, Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland, and Academy 3/13; all speakers told of community needs being fulfilled, from thousands of meals provided for hungry children during school holidays (Feast of Fun), to committed Christians successfully mentoring school leavers in their trade, the provision of foster care for homeless teenagers, working with immigrant communities on integration, to schemes tackling loneliness and isolation amongst our ageing population.

NO CHURCH CAN TACKLE THSES PROBLEMS ALONE.

We need each other to act as one.

MOVEMENT is happening not just locally, but nationally and beyond. There is a plan to come together for a weekend of seeking to find out what God is calling His people to do in His world in May 2020.

Because we have no clergy leader at the present time, I believe it is important we don't get left behind. Is this another issue for our long suffering elders to tackle? However, the coming together of over 1,000 committed Christians that night, representing it is estimated over 60 worshipping congregations, would seem to be a promising start and, with God's blessing, Good News for the future of Tees Valley.

Shirley Moorse



Come- Everything is Ready!

1st March 2019

God's feast is open to everyone, not only the rich and powerful who think they have better and more interesting things to do, but equally those out in the highways and byways, – the poor, the homeless, the marginalised. They have often been led to believe that the invitation is not for them and may need to be invited several times before they can be persuaded that it is OK for them to accept it. As we begin to prepare for the WDP service from Slovenia, may we also remember that the service is not an end in itself: it demands a prayerful response from us.

Elizabeth Burroughs (Chairperson)

Synod Prayer Diary

3 February:

Christ Church LEP (Methodist/URC), North Broomhill;
Revd Linda Coulthard (Methodist)

Synod Mission Enabler, Revd Jane Rowell

10 February:

Trinity LEP (Methodist/URC), Ashington; St Andrew's & St
Mark's LEP (Methodist/URC), Newbiggin-by-the-Sea; Revd
Marie Attwood (Methodist)

17 February:

Racial Justice Sunday

Spring Synod Retreat at Ampleforth Abbey (19-21 February)

Waddington Street URC, Durham; St Andrew's Dawson
Street, Crook LEP (Methodist/URC); Revd Ray Anglesea;
Revd Christopher Humble (Methodist)

24 February:

PCM, the four Presbyterian Societies: Men's, Women's,
Youth and Activists Group (*young marrieds*) and for our own
fund raising for PCM

Fair Trade Fortnight: (25 February - 10 March)

The Anglican Bishop of Newcastle Diocese, the Rt Revd
Christine Hardman

Women's World Day of Prayer (1 March), theme 'Come –
Everything is Ready!'

Northallerton URC 200th Anniversary Celebrations

An Anniversary Music Night

with Gareth Davies-Jones...

A solo concert of songs with a story to tell, accompanied on his selection of acoustic guitars.

As part of its 200 year celebrations, Northallerton's Zion United Reformed Church is presenting an evening with this award-winning, Northern singer/songwriter in March with light refreshments.

After over a decade of touring experience and around ten CDs, plus commissions from organisations as varied as Traidcraft and The People's Kitchen, plus an Arts Council residency at the Newcastle Mining Institute, Gareth is becoming increasingly acclaimed. His music has been featured on BBC television and radio and used in a variety of settings - from helping WW2 Arctic Convoy veterans receive the recognition of the UK government, to the ongoing campaign for International Trade Justice.

'...instantly memorable melodies and superb musical accompaniment. Gareth's voice is faultless throughout.' FATEA.

'Rich soulful vocals, a fine ear for melody and masterful acoustic guitar playing.' R2 Magazine.

'One of the UK's best-kept musical secrets, powerful songs and affecting performances.' Properganda.

'Very beautiful music. I can thoroughly recommend this.' BBC's Bob Harris.

Instructive and mellow and relaxing for all ages. Come along and enjoy it for yourself...live...and bring your family and friends!

Friday, 22nd March, 7.30. Tickets £5, in advance or on the door. Further information from puttock@one-name.org

Guisborough

In November 2017 a Guisfolk service was devoted to introducing the new United Reformed Church initiative of ‘Walking the Way.’ where we invited to be directly involved in learning and responding to a close focus on lifelong Christian discipleship and mission. The accompanying guide literature says: “... Walking the Way seeks to deepen our understanding of what being a Christian disciple really means – how we can live as disciples when we are in church and perhaps, more importantly, when we are not.” So perhaps, one year later, it may be good to look at our experience after Donna Moore first raised the question: What does it mean to be a disciple?

The main guide for this exploration of our personal faith and fellowship in Christ is the book *Holy Habits* by Andrew Roberts, where in 18 short chapters, full of simple, common sense and pointed anecdotes he sets out to develop in our minds the idea of the nature of discipleship and how it can be expanded and nurtured. So it was in the Guisfolk services, where members are able to express their own view of faith, that we explored the ideas, put forward by the author, over the course of 2018.

In February *The Adventure of Discipleship* was the idea discussed. For the children’s’ address the story of *Treasure Island* by Robert L Stephenson was the starting point. A sea going adventure searching for pirate gold with all of its attendant risks. Are you a person who is prepared to take a risk was the question asked? Some members of the congregation were honest enough to admit that risk was often faced with some serious concern, as we all may feel at various times during our lives. When Jesus called his disciples to follow him they were certainly taking a risk as events eventually showed.

In China, at the present time, the Communist party is intensifying religious persecution because of unease over rising numbers of

Guisborough Calendar

Weekly

Thursdays	9.30am – 11.30am	Market Day Coffee Morning
Thursdays	11.30am	Quiet Time in Church. Prayers and reflections with Maureen, Madge, Ken and oth- ers. Details on church notice board

Christians thought to be a threat to their political agenda. Being a Christian in that country is fraught with risk. In October last year Wang Yi, of the underground church Early Rain Covenant Church, asked his congregation if they had successfully spread the Gospel in their city. Today he and his wife are in detention because of their faith and this call to action. The risks we need to take for Christ in Britain are there but not at this level of threat. Something to reflect on.

In April the discussion was about the breaking of bread. Led by Donna Moore, we had question and answer session and then pared off in groups talk about our best experience of communion. Central to this issue was the importance of the sacrament not only for the church and local fellowships, but what it means to each one of us as part of our faith in Christ. For some people the form in which the ceremony was presented was very important. So do we need a minister to present this worship or can anyone be the leading celebrant? This issue was also discussed at the November Book Club meeting where it was agreed that anyone may lead this ceremony in any location. Jane Tomlin added some poignancy to this understanding by recalling an occasion when Dr Andrew Frazer, a former minister in our area, as a naval medical officer, took communion in the Belsen Concentration Camp shortly after its liberation in 1945. How would our Lord Jesus view this?

From this point on during the year, whilst we didn't strictly follow the Holy Habits book most of our fellowship worship, in Guisfolk services, touched on much that was discussed by the author, Andrew Roberts. The chapters on Service and Gladness and Generosity received some coverage in services for Sea Sunday and Commitment for Life, the world development programme of the URC praying for and helping the countries of Bangladesh, Central America, Israel, Palestine and Zimbabwe.

In July, during the Sea Sunday service Susan Griffiths spoke about the work of the Seafarers Mission and the help they provide on ships coming to or ports, advising and assisting crews and individuals on the various problems that they have to face as they travel the world. As 95% of our imported good come by sea this is vital, crucial service – and needs to be remembered. In August, Jenny Reynolds described how a woman in Bangladesh was helped to start a business to grow tea. Starting with £6.00 this was built up to £2,000 after a few years, a large sum of money in that country and a heart- warming story of how so much can be done with so little.

Other services dealt with discipleship and prayer. Peter Etwell exploring the nature of discipleship by asking the questions about who was Jesus and what he now means to us now? And then later Darren Thompson reflecting on prayer as the way we can communicate with God.

A high point for me was the service for Pentecost – the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples and the creation of the church. We had a birthday cake, which was good for a birthday – which it was. There were three candles on top: red for the Holy Spirit, blue for

	Vestry	Communion	Door	Flowers
3rd Feb	B Ward	J Basham	M Burrows	Donna
10th Feb	J Basham		R Tunnicliffe	Andre
17th Feb	M Burrows		D Beattie	Helen Burrows
24th Feb	D Beattie		The children	Annette

God and green for Jesus. Children lit the candles and one of the youngest blew them out. In a reflection, Susan Griffiths referred to Tom Wright, former Bishop of Durham, as empathising the importance of Holy Spirit as part of the church and its mission – and then went on to say how difficult she found it to explain this concept to someone who was not a Christian. In a largely secular world around us, it is for me so easy to understand this difficulty, sympathise and then think: how would I manage that question?

That difficult question raises an issue mentioned in the introduction to the programme: *Walking the Way*. There it says at the end of the quotation: “...seeks to deepen our understanding of what being a Christian disciple really means – how we can live as disciples when we are in church and perhaps, ...and then: more importantly, when we are not.” Exploring these issues in church is one thing, but seeing them manifest outside in the community is much more difficult. It requires commitment, vision and a willingness to take a risk.

Perhaps, we can take some encouragement from comments made by Tim Hastie-Smith, national Director of the Scripture Union who says: ...a report entitled ‘Europe’s Young Adults and Religion’, claims that ‘Young Adults increasingly are not identifying with or practicing religion. Christianity as a default, as a norm, is gone, and probably for good.....’, But we have been here before. On Easter Day 1800, just six people took communion in St Paul’s Cathedral. So what changed, that Christianity then suddenly surged in popularity? A key factor was evangelism. The church treated Britain as if it was near-pagan and set about demonstrating the relevance of the gospel to a new generation. Our first minister, William Hymers, was quoted, around 1805, as saying, when unable to go as a missionary to India, “I’ll have to convert the heathens here (Guisborough) instead”. The Scripture Union has taken up the challenge with its 95 project aiming to improve on the present situation where 95% of children have no church connection. Looking to the future, in young people, must be the way forward – or walking the way as the URC have advised.

But how do we do this and where do we start? One simple idea comes from a quotation I wrote in the article for February last year: quote from the Guardian columnist the Rev Giles Frazer of St Mary's Newington, South London and former canon chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral. Under the title of Loose Canon he once wrote how: 'people will not be drawn to the church and faith by metaphysics but by community. By being part of a family and valued, then from this experience faith will naturally emerge.' How can we really engage with our local community? Perhaps, we should ask them? What do you need? This was the advice given by Andrew Roberts in Holy Habits. I think we should take it as part of our service for Jesus.

And then another thought of encouragement: remember the persecuted Christians in China. Suffering, as they are at this time, one of their pastors, Huang Xiaoning, is quoted as saying: The Communist Party wants to be the God of China. It is scared of the churches. Such courage in making that statement. If only our politicians, of all political views, were afraid of us well, what would that mean.....?

Happy New Year.

Ray Tunnicliffe.

**DEAR GOD,
I WANNA TAKE A
MINUTE, NOT TO ASK
FOR ANYTHING FROM
YOU, BUT SIMPLY TO
SAY THANK YOU,
FOR ALL I HAVE.**

Redcar

Jack's Diary

Sorry to start my 'diary' on an unpleasant note but I was attacked in December on two separate occasions, some big dogs see an old tottery pooch (me) and go for it. There was blood, my blood but it had its benefits. Those lovely fun girls who work at **Scott Street Chippy** heard my sad tale and sent me battered sausages and a get well card. How brilliant is that? So that's why I'm spreading the good news about Scott Street Chippy, Catherine tells me the fish and chips are good too!

There is another Good News, the best news ever, the gospel of Jesus which is worth reading over and over again. **Mark 16 v15** Jesus said "*Go into all the world and preach the good news to all the human race*".

Joel 1 v3 "*Tell it to your children and let your children tell it to their children and their children to the next generation.*"

Duty Rota

	Vestry	Door
3 Feb	Cath	Brian
10 Feb	Elaine	Brenda
17 Feb	June	Brian
24 Feb	Cath	Brian

SATURDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2019

COFFEE MORNING

10 – 12 noon

Back by Popular Demand

Coffee & Scone ~ £1.50

Last time we had more than 15 varieties of scone!

Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning?

If you were up early during the first week of December and if it was clear and frosty, you'd have seen Venus the brightest of the planets, the thin crescent of the waning moon being to the east.

People often link Venus with the star followed by the Wise Men as the hymn words say "Star of the east the horizon adorning, Guide where our infant redeemer is born". However we can become confused for the star is a planet and it is the goddess of love, not a son of the morning.

We now know that it is a most unwelcoming place, searingly hot, its surface hidden by poisonous acidic clouds and no human can go there without complete protection. It has been help up as a warning by Sir David Attenborough as to what could happen here if global warming becomes unstoppable. He speaks as a Twenty first Century Prophet.

John Crowther

Shortening becomes Lengthening

I noticed that in the picture for the Advent them of St. John the Baptist that he was given a long arm with a pointing finger. For he was the herald of Christ and pointed towards Him. His feast day is at mid summer, the longest day. Then the days begin to shorten at a rate of about 2 ½ minutes a week. This will be a smoother change for we are not to have the summer time hour anymore!

The darker mornings in the north last until winter solstice or the sun standing still. Then the Light of Christ begins to grow as the old Feast of the unconquered sun (son) of Roman times is remembered. St. John the Gospel writer points upwards at Jesus on the cross on many rood screens.

John Crowther

The Wonder of God's Creation

On page 2 of Group New the Christmas Picture is symmetrical. To get people interested we ask "Is your body symmetrical?" The answer "on the outside 'yes' but inside 'no'".

The picture in Group News is framed by three symmetrical arches. The star is slightly off centre but it would have slowly moved west as the sky does. Apart from the distant, seemingly small, approaching kings and the dove this picture is symmetrical and this makes it pleasing to look at.

However we live in an unsymmetrical world. Snail shells, narwhal white whale tusks and other animal and plant parts twist either clockwise or counter clockwise, as do bats moving to or from their roosting caves, perhaps influenced by the earth's rotation.

Collectors give high value to rare animal or plant parts that twist the wrong way. Tweedledum and Tweedledee from Alice in Wonderland are perfectly symmetrical. Twins still have invisible links in what they think and do. We have twin grandchildren who are fortunately delightfully ordinary.

These perhaps somewhat irrelevant facts show the wonder of God's Creation of which we are a part.

John Crowther

Redcar Calendar

Weekly

Thursday 9.30am Prayers

10.00-11.30am Pop-in Centre

St Andrew's

Condolences

Please remember Norris Robert-son and her family in your prayers. Sadly Ian passed away in the early hours of Christmas Day after a long illness.

Christmas Social

The Christmas Social held on 19th December raised £41.00 for Christian Aid. Everyone who attended had a lovely and enjoyable evening.

Women's Day of Prayer

is to take place on

Friday 1st March - 2.00pm

here at St. Andrews.

Refreshments will be served after the service.

Coffee for Charity

18th Nov	Embrace	£13.00
25th Nov	Daisy Chain	£17.30
2nd Dec	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£30.00
9th Dec	Boys' Brigade	£30.65
23rd Dec	British Heart	£14.00
30th Dec	Daisy Chain	£14.50
6th Jan	NE Air Ambulance	£14.00
13th Jan	Boys' Brigade	£23.30

Christmas Quiz

Here are the answers to Do-reen's Christmas Quiz which raised £22.00 for church funds.

1. The News or The Young Ones.
2. Watchdog.
3. The Eggheads.
4. Relocation, relocation.
5. Men Behaving Badly.
6. Seven Hills of Rome-CQVECAP Capitoline, Quivinal, Viminal etc
7. Rivers draining the East Pennines SWACD Swale, Wharfe, Airedale's, Calder, Don.
8. Royal Houses of England-NPLYTSHW-Norman Plantagenet Lancaster etc.
9. Order of Sharps in Music - F# C#G#D#A#E#etc.
10. Geological Periods - C O S D C P T J C E O M P P - Cambrian, Ordovician,etc.
11. O come all ye faithful
12. O little town of Bethlehem.
13. On Christmas Night.
14. While Shepherd's watched.
15. Once in Royal David's City.
16. Binn's.
17. Safeway.
18. Dolcis
19. Macfisheries.
20. Uptons
21. Robin.
22. Audi.
23. Vauxhall.
24. Morris.
25. Alfa Romeo

St Andrew's Calendar

Weekly/Monthly

Boys Brigade

Details available from ministers
and church elders

Preachers

	Marton 10.00am	Guisborough 10.00am	Redcar 11.00am
3-Feb	Donna Moore	Ken Harris Communion	Margaret Harris
10-Feb	K & M Harris Parade	Ian Smith	Jan Harper
17-Feb	Norma Johnson Communion	Guis Folk	Pam Stenson
24-Feb	Jan Harper	Norma Johnson	Brian Stephenson Meeting

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

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