

# *Group News*



*\* July \* 2021 \* August \**

The monthly magazine for:

**Guisborough URC**

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Part of the URC Northern Synod – [www.urc-northernsynod.org.uk](http://www.urc-northernsynod.org.uk)

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# Pastoral Letter

*'Epaphras from among your number and a servant of Jesus Christ, send greetings. He is always wrestling on your behalf in prayer, asking that you may stand firm, mature and fully assured of the will of God.'*

'I'll pray for you'. Countless people must have made that promise innumerable times across the years, but what does it actually mean? Sometimes it's little more than a platitude, a suitably pious-sounding way of avoiding the need to offer any more concrete help. Usually, though, we offer it in all sincerity, but sometimes, despite our best intentions, fail to act upon it. We mean to pray, but there are so many needs to pray for and so little time in which to do it. Meaningful prayer tends to go out of the window, reduced to a few cursory and general words. Contrast that with the words of Paul, a tribute to Epaphras, a man 'always wrestling in prayer' for the Phillippians. Of all his gifts, this, in Paul's opinion, was what made Epaphras stand out...his dedication to prayer.

We can see from this that for Epaphras, prayer wasn't a casual, take-it-or-leave-it activity; it was part of his life, a privilege and a responsibility he wrestled with every day. It wasn't a vague activity either. he knew for whom he was praying, what he was praying about and why he was praying. Equally, prayer wasn't just concerned with his own affairs or even his immediate circle of family and friends. It reached out to others, concerned with their needs and their welfare.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, he acted upon his prayers. 'I can personally testify' Paul went on to say.' that he works tirelessly both for you and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis.' What exactly he did we're not told, but it's clear that Epaphras didn't leave it all to God; he played his part in ensuring that his prayers were answered.

'I'll pray for you'...it's a wonderful promise if we really mean it.....

May the Lord bless you and keep you. Shalom.

Blessings

Jan

# *Synod Prayers*

## **July**

- 4 July: South East Northumberland Ecumenical Area (SENEA) (Methodist and URC) and Presidnt, Revd Marie Attwood. URC General Assembly meets, 9-12<sup>th</sup> July. We pray for Moderators of General Assembly, their chaplains, the Clerks to the Assembly, all Assembly Officers, and all who gather and contribute.
- 11 July: Northumbrian Industrial Mission and Mrs Fiona Usher, Chaplain Team Leader
- 18 July: The work of Synod Executive Committee
- 25 July: St James's URC, Alnwick; Warkworth URC; Revd Joan Grindrod-Helmn  
The work of LMMR (Local Mission and Ministry Review)

## **August**

- 1 August: PCM, their office staff at Church House, Khovo, Maputo.  
The Anglican Bishop of Jarrow, the Rt Revd Sarah Clark
- 8 August: The work of Pastoral Committee and Convenor, Revd Joan Grindrod-Helmn; The Anglican Bishop of Durham, the Rt Revd Paul Butler
- 15 August: Ponteland URC; St John's URC, Wideopen; St Aidan's URC, Hexham; Horsley URC
- 22 August: St George's URC, Morpeth; Great Bavington URC; Widdrington URC  
Revd Julian Sanders
- 29 August: The RC Bishop of Middlesbrough, the Rt Revd Terry Drainey

# Guisborough

As I sit down to write this the government are trying to decide when to remove the Coronavirus restrictions once and for all. I am hoping, along with most clinicians and scientists, I suspect, that they will delay this for a few more weeks to allow more of the population to receive their second vaccinations.

By the time you read this you will know what they decided.

Unless you are like my husband, who enjoys being confined at home with his cat and his computers, you will have found this past year very difficult.

As a front line health worker I was affected by severe anxiety, worried about how to keep my patients, colleagues and family safe, especially my elderly, frail mother. I worried about what would happen if I became ill, not to me but to the people who were relying on me. We were all on a very steep learning curve trying to obtain scarce supplies of PPE by begging or borrowing any we could find. Trying new ways of helping our patients without putting them at risk of infection.

Perhaps you had similar anxieties about the virus and the new ways of living your life. Perhaps you lost someone in your family or among your friends during this time and were unable to grieve properly with others. Were you shielding, isolated at home, reliant on others to bring you supplies of food and medication? Some of you, like my friend, volunteered to provide that vital service or to be a friend on the end of a phone to those on their own.

We have had to adapt to new ways of being church as well. Many of us have been worshipping alone with email services whether in print or downloaded audio file. Some of the time, some of our churches have managed to meet together in small numbers, socially distanced. For those who just don't do technology I am sure this has been a vital source of support. We have prayed for our own congregation members and for our fellow churches and those prayers have been a comfort to many.

As things open up our health services will not just go back to business as usual but will try to learn from the experience of the last year. We will seek to discover if we can learn different ways of providing a better service to our patients. In the same way as churches we shouldn't be just going back to the same way of doing things as if we haven't learnt anything from this exhausting

## 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 others. Details on church notice board

and difficult time. We have had more time to think about what church means and how important our faith is in our lives. I don't think I would have got through without the Daily Devotions that dropped into my email inbox every day and the various different services that came on a Sunday so I had a choice to suit every time slot or mood.

How do we begin to think differently about how to do church? It is hard to change old habits. It is always good to go to The Bible for guidance; even though it was put together a long time ago, this book still has a lot to teach us. Recently I have been finding myself getting confused between the Gifts of the Spirit and the Fruits of the Spirit. The Gifts of the Spirit can suggest the roles we can take within the church and are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. I notice there isn't a gift of being good with money or for organising meetings in the list. Do we need to rethink our priorities?

**Sunday, 25th July 2021**

**10 am**

**there will be a  
Memorial Service  
in memory of  
David Houston.**

The fruits of the Spirit are the personality traits we can all aspire to, to be more Christ-like. They can be found in Galatians 5:22-26 and surely these are the qualities we all need. They can make us attractive to others so that they become interested in what Christ can do for them.

Of course our next important foundation for any examination of our church life is prayer. It is in that constant communication with God, in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit that we will be able to discern God's plans for us and be equipped for service where there is need.

Here at Guisborough we will have held a meeting on the 27th of June to try to discern our way forward as a church. Let us continue to pray for each other as congregations and as a Group as we face a still uncertain future for we do not face it alone.

## **Psalm 46**

*God is our refuge and our strength, our ever-present aid,  
and therefore, though the earth be moved, we will not be afraid.*

*The Lord of hosts is on our side, our safety to secure;  
the God of Jacob is for us a refuge strong and sure.*

*Donna Moore*

# *Redcar*

We are pleased to have our church back open for Sunday Worship. Numbers attending have been small and as yet we have not been in a position to make further plans for the summer months.

Our members remain in our prayers and we hope that over the summer months more will feel able to return to worship with us.

*June*

# *St Andrew's*

## **News from Rosemary**

Uganda is going into another Covid-19 lockdown: the Indian and South African variants of coronavirus are here in Kampala spreading like wildfire. Fortunately fatalities are rare but infection rate is rife especially in young people so schools, colleges and universities are to close within three days. Travel between Districts has been suspended for 42 days to try to contain spread of new variant.

Flooded roads in rural areas had delayed her planned move back to her home village, so now restriction on movement will set it back yet again.

Please keep Uganda in your prayers.

*Shirley Moore*

## **Angela Savage**

Angela Savage has now moved to Morpeth to be near to her two daughters, Clare and Kate.

We wish her well in her new home and send our love and best wishes.

## **Flower List**

There are still places on our Flower List for anyone who wishes to make a donation. The List is on the notice board. Thank you.

*Joan Swan*

## **Group Elders**

Group elders plan to meet on Wednesday 7th July at 10.30am at St Andrew's.

Material for the September Magazine to church editors by Sunday 15th August please. All material, including late additions, to Group Editor by Sunday 22nd August please.

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