

Group News



** June * 2014 * June **

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

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Minister

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Dear Friends,

June is the month when summer really begins, and I hope that you are all looking forward to the warmer weather and kinder months, that is if they come this year. Really though we are lucky to live in such a lush green country, a country where rain does come, for we are some of the blessed ones in our world. I realise that not everyone may take this view, or want to acknowledge this view in the cold and rainy days of summer, but to live in a country with a moderate climate means that we *are* some of the lucky ones in our world. Because of that moderate climate we have plenty of water falling on our land, and thus plenty to drink. Even so, there are years when hosepipe bans come into place and water is transported around the country in tanker lorries. But whatever happens in terms of water shortages in our country this summer, we know that we will always have enough water to fill our baths and that clean, fresh water will come out of our taps every time we turn them on. The worst impact for us is that we are not to water our plants in our garden with a hosepipe. But what about the impact on those around the world affected by water shortages? Our experience is, of course, a far cry from the millions and millions of people affected by water shortages around our world on a daily basis. In fact, the problem is set to become so acute, that it is said to be one of the biggest challenges of future years, even though the problem seems big enough now!

There are some parts of the world, of course, that have arid areas for hundreds of years, but one of the issues is that these dry zones are growing, causing the desertification of more and more land around. And new areas, that previously had adequate water resources are now also turning into desert, as population density increases in those areas, draining the water table, leaving people without enough water. Recent changes in weather patterns which have caused flooding in some areas, have also left other areas water rain, another cause of water shortage. So the question that is becoming ever more pressing for answers is “How are we going to

provide enough water, and thus enough food, for our ever growing population?” Because water is, and ever more increasingly shall be, the main cause of the struggles and pressures on human existence.

We are all probably aware that our world population surpassed 7 billion last year, but are you aware that since we hit that figure our population has increased by a further 234 million people. My son, Dominic, and I found a website on the internet which told us this, but the scary thing was that as we watched we could see the number of people being added to our world, as well as see the number dying. And we could see the countries this was happening in. While Dominic counted to 5 he was amazed that approximately 20 people had died. But what was more amazing was that, while he again counted to five, 37 people had been born. It was a hard website to draw ourselves away from as the world population just continued to climb at an astonishing rate right before our eyes.

We may feel that we do not have a duty to care for those far away around the world. We may not fully understand how our high energy consuming lifestyles in the west have caused, in part at least, some of their problems. We may not know how to start helping solve problems which seem so enormous, but as Christians, and as fellow human inhabitants of our planet, surely we should try! We are no more special individuals for having been born in one of the richest countries on the planet. Others are no less special individuals for having been born into dire poverty and drought. So while we enjoy the sunny days this summer, let us also appreciate and enjoy the rainy days, and remember to pray for those in need, asking for God to show us how to truly care and respond.

God bless!

Revd. Catey Morrison

Synod Prayers

1st June - Mission Executive Committee; Convenor Revd Lis Mullen

8th June - Pentecost – Stockton; St Columba's, Billingham; St. Andrew's Mission, Thornaby; Revd Colin Offor

15th June - Trinity – Trinity LEP, Gosforth; Ministry Team: Mr Andrew Clark; Revd John Paul; Revd Eden Fletcher; Pastoral & Community Worker Ms Mary Bellshaw

22nd June - South East Northumberland Ecumenical Area; President Revd Barry Welch; Secretary Mrs Joyce Calcraft; Treasurer Mr Jeff Owen

29th June - PCM: The annual synod meeting in the coming weeks; hosts and representatives attending; safe journeys on perilous roads; Bishop of Durham Rt Revd Paul Butler; Bishop of Jarrow Rt Revd Mark Bryant

Advance Warning Group Trip to Ampleforth Abbey

There will be a Group trip to Ampleforth Abbey on Saturday 27th September. The day will comprise of a trip to Ampleforth Abbey in the morning where there will be time for a look round the Abbey, including the Visitors Centre, the Bookshop, and the Coffee Shop, including time to walk in the grounds of the Abbey. We will be attending to early afternoon worship with the monks, before leaving to go to nearby Rievaulx Terrace, a National Trust woodland garden, where we will enjoy our picnics together before returning home late afternoon. Transport will be provided, and the cost shall be for the transport and for the entry to Rievaulx Terrace for non National Trust members. The price shall be determined once we know how many people are planning to go. Please let Catey know if you would like to go (01287 651926 or morrison.lingdale@btinternet.com)

East Cleveland Group Prayer Pointers

- 1st June - Pray for all those who are struggling with debt in our neighbourhoods, particularly for those who do not know where to turn to for help, who are feeling trapped and hopeless.
- 8th June - Pray for all those whose plans for life right now have changed due to accident or illness, unemployment or loss. Pray as they cope with the sudden change to their lives, and for the rebuilding of their life.
- 15th June - Pray for those who cannot leave their homes and get out into the sunshine of these summer days, because visitors don't come and they can't otherwise manage to get out.
- 22nd June - Pray for children preparing to move up to secondary school, with taster days happening around now. Pray that they will not feel stressed about the move ahead, and the new expectations upon them from teachers and parents, but able to feel excited about meeting new people and all that is ahead for them.
- 29th June - Pray for all those who come into your mind this week, giving thanks to God for them, interceding for them and seeking God as to what God might be calling you to do for them.

Modern

Too bored to think, too proud to pray, too timid to leave what we are used to doing, we have shut ourselves behind our standard roses; we love ourselves only and our neighbours no longer. As for the incarnation, that is a fairy story for children, if we think it healthy for children to be told fairy stories.

John Betjeman Poet late 20th Century

How to be a Bad Christian

I don't believe God divides the world between Christians and non-Christians, believers and non-believers ... God must be more interested in the kind of people we are than in what we believe.

I am a bad Christian. Far from having answers to all of life's hard questions, I have an ever-increasing list of these questions. Far from being an unwavering believer, I have frequent doubts. Far from being enamoured with everything in the Church and Christianity, I often despair of them. I hate the idea of being part of an exclusive club - the righteous ones! And I feel more at home in a pub with honest 'pagans' than I do in many churches.

But I am captivated by the figure of Jesus, ...The original followers of Jesus were called 'people of the way' - folk who identified with the way of life that Jesus taught and demonstrated. I like this. I also like the fact that his first followers often behaved like a bunch of buffoons, that they misunderstood him, spoke out of turn, argued with each other, fell asleep when they should have been awake, basically kept on getting things wrong. But they continued following him. This gives me hope.

I have respect for all the faith traditions, and I have dear friends of all faiths and none, but for me, Jesus Christ is the decisive revelation of God. The world continues to see many Christly figures, whom I admire greatly and try emulate; but Jesus is, for me, the epiphany of what God is like - of God's character and passion. He is the one who gives shape and meaning to my world.

At the centre of Christ's message was the Kingdom of God - a vision of what the world would be like if God were king instead of the authorities and politicians. Its a vision of justice, love and reconciliation, a culture of hope and freedom that I continually sign up for and try to represent.

If you like the sound of this ... If you share my faltering faith ...
Congratulations! You are a bad Christian!

From "How to be a bad Christian" by Dave Tomlinson, vicar of St. Luke's, Holloway for ten years leader of "Holy Joe", an unconventional 'church' meeting in a local pub. Re-printed from Ecumenical Fellowship of Aelred magazine

News from the Persecuted Church

“For months and months, families and entire communities in Assult have lived in anguish. Kidnappings occurred every day. The perpetrators of these crimes were known to all, but when the Christians reported them to the security forces, nothing happened.” The words of a church leader highlighted the distress recently caused to the Christian community in Assult province by ruthless Muslim gangs. But praise God that in February the Egyptian security forces dismantled the organised crime network behind the campaign of kidnappings, robberies, attacks and extortions; the church leader called their action a decisive change in police policy. Pray that God will bless Christians in Assult with strength and peace (Psalm 29:11).

From the Barnabus Fund Prayer Diary www.barnabusfund.org

Christian converts in Iran are at particular risk of being arbitrarily arrested and detained on false political charges, and over the years may have fled persecution because of their faith

Christian Solidarity Worldwide Prayer diary; ww.csw.org.uk

Guisborough

On Sunday, 8th, June we celebrate Pentecost – the birthday of the church. This is the occasion when the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit and Peter preached his famous sermon – the first ever for Christianity. And yet although it has great significance in the Christian year, it somehow seems to be neglected. In times passed when it was more popularly known as Whitsuntide – with the school holidays tied into it, then its importance appeared clearer to most people. But its relevance remains – as the start of the church, the body, the people of Christ – that is us. In Guisborough the Bridge As-

sociation have arranged for an ecumenical service of praise is to be held in the Priory Gardens. As the organisers have said: *"We always think it's a shame that the one time in the year that the town sees us all together is on Good Friday when the mood is solemn - here's an opportunity to rectify that."* In effect this can be seen as the start of a new year in the life of the church and the time to consider how we move on to do things differently, a little better – being more effective for Christ.

Modern society can be a difficult environment in which to work for Christ. However, recently there has appeared a new helper in this our mission in the name of Jorge Bergoglio – otherwise known as Pope Francis I.

In the year since his enthronement he has managed to create a positive image for Christianity world wide media – that most important, and all pervading, engine of information and opinion forming. Suddenly by engaging with the concerns, suffering and injustices put upon the poor – and taking on a frugal life style – he has achieved a change in mood towards, not only the Ro-

man Catholic Church, amidst all of its present troubles – by association has cast a bright ray of sunshine on all of Christianity.

Pope Francis has emulated his namesake by choosing humility and solidarity with the poor of the world as a road map for the church, salvation. A year ago, in the Sistine Chapel, he called for the church to come out of itself and to go to the periferies of life to meet the marginalised and the excluded. Later he told assembled journalists that he wants a "poor church for the poor." Of course many religious figures have said this in the past – but perhaps the consensus of opinion seems now to think that he may mean it. So for the church generally: concerned with women priests and bishops, gay marriage and various scandals – we now seem to have been given something positive - a window of opportunity to focus on our central purpose – the Great Commission of our Lord – to show love, fairness and justice for all.

Although, we have various differences with our Roman Catholic friends, we can take this piece of success, displayed in

full international publicity, to help us break our cover as Christians – and move forward to good for the kingdom God, by doing good for others and bringing people to know Jesus. The condition could be better now than for some time, so really we need to make good use of this opportunity.

Moving forward for Christ is a continuing process and we often need to see good example to encourage us in our personal efforts. In Guisborough Church, and for the East Cleveland Group, we had a fine instance in the commissioning of Dr Donna Moore as a Lay Preacher, at a service on Saturday, 26th, April, in Guisborough U.R.C. The ceremony was the culmination of years of hard work and study by Donna to fulfil her call to preach the word of the Lord. And as with all things that are really worthwhile it was not easy. And, in a recent sermon, Donna reflected on the times that she faced her doubts about faith - like Thomas, the disciple and came through it all. As Jesus said “*Blessed are those who believe, but have not seen.*”

The Bridge Association is an-

other good example of how a positive image of Christianity can be presented to the community at large. For years they have done so much good work in Guisborough and the local area. This has been especially well demonstrated, in the past two years, by the food bank - giving out food to people in dire need. In this they are part of a network of other such banks operating throughout the country – which have grabbed media attention and that of the government. So, for the public at large, we do have something showing a practical manifestation of faith.

Recently, on the TV news there was the story of a young man who resolved to do a good deed for someone each day for a year. I have no idea if he was a Christian or not - but his commitment illustrated so clearly the values of faith – and it was so well received by the media commentators. It was such a contrast to the constant bad news and the all pervading promotion of materialism.

In June we in the East Cleveland Group of churches embark on the *Breaking Your Cover* course. Here we will be given the oppor-

Guisborough Calendar

Thu 5 th June	7.30pm	Group Elders meet in the Hall
Tue 17 th June	2.30pm	Belmont Care Home service
	7.15pm	Guisborough Church Meeting,

Weekly

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

tunity to discover how we can better communicate to Gospel to others - to tell people about Christ. This has never been easy – but there are positive signs out there in the community. For most people there has always been a need for spirituality - something in the modern world, which isn't always clearly defined. We need to be that clear definition – for Christ.

Ray Tunncliffe

Guisborough Choral Society Midsummer Melodies

**Saturday June 21st at 7.30 pm
St. Nicholas Parish Hall**

A light and varied programme including choral arrangements of stirring Irish melodies, English folk songs, American spirituals and a tribute to the Swing era. An extra highlight will be the young flautist Millie Stonehouse.

Tickets are £7 (£1 under-19s) to include strawberries & cream, plus a glass of wine included; from Guisborough Bookshop, Greensleeves Music, wegottickets.com.

	Vestry	Communion	Door	Flowers
1 st June	J Reynolds	B Ward	P Etwell	J Reynolds
8 th June	D Cross		D Moore	R Tunncliffe
15 th June	M Burrows		J Basham	L Reeve
22 nd June	D Houston		M Houston	J Basham
29 th June	P Etwell		M Ward	M Houston

**A Sermon Preached by
Dr Donna Moore on Sunday, 27th, April 2013
Following her Commissioning as a Lay Preacher in
Guisborough United Reformed Church**

In the Lectionary this week it is described as Easter 2 and indeed we should be still celebrating Easter. Don't know if there is any chocolate left in your house, not in ours in ours but we should still be celebrating. And we actually have two passages this morning which are about doubt and fear. We have the disciples who are locked away for fear of the authorities. They are hiding – they are afraid. And then we have poor Thomas who was left out of that wanted experience of meeting the risen Jesus. How left out he must have felt. He must felt out of the loop and completely cut off from the other disciples and very despondent. He was so filled with doubt and not willing to believe.

And then the first letter of Peter. We don't know whether it was really written by Peter or whether it was written later after his death. It was written from Rome, if not by Peter then probably by his followers, and it was written to churches in Asia who were afraid and in doubt. It was the time of the *Great Persecution* hence Peter was put to death around this time. And it is not so much the just the persecution by the authorities but they were probably prey to verbal and physical abuse from their neighbours which is sometimes even more difficult to cope with. And so there are the people he is writing to who are feeling a bit alienated – as poor Thomas who is filled with doubt and is tempted by unbelief.

When we are in doubt and when we are in fear these are the times when it is really hard to believe. Like Thomas we can be filled with doubt because we cannot see. Also, we are like the readers of St Peter's letters were so afraid that they were just unable to see clearly. What is the answer to these doubts and fears?

Well for Thomas the answer is to meet the risen Christ. He changes completely, transformed by that experience. It was similar to the experience of the disciples, previously, who had been in such terrible fear. And then Jesus appears and we have this encounter with the

risen Christ. And Jesus says, “Peace be with you,” and they are transformed and are no longer afraid.

But we are not like Thomas and the disciples we cannot meet the risen Christ in the flesh. We are more like Peters readers. But Peter goes on to emphasise all that his readers have gained through their faith in Jesus; the Jesus they cannot see and cannot meet - and yet they have gained great gifts through their faith. He speaks to them of a living hope and reminds them of their reward – the reward they will receive in heaven on the day of the Lord – the day when Jesus is revealed. It is a rather an eschatological approach. I love that word. It is basically anything to do with the end times the day of the Lord - the day when Jesus will return again. But I am cautious about Peters writing here. I don't feel comfortable with taking someone's suffering doubt and fear - it will all be all right because you will get your reward in heaven. It sounds a little bit too much like pie in the sky when we die. It's not terribly comforting for here and now.

Yesterday we were here celebrating - a great day - a preaching mission. At it the Interim Moderator quoted Milton Jones. He's a great favourite of mine and a great comedian and a Christian. So I am going to quote Milton Jones. I am going to share with you one of his ten second sermons. Milton Jones writes: Having a Christian faith cannot be like paying into some sort of pension scheme where you get eternal life in exchange for an hour of boredom each week. It has to be more like being a part-time lightning conductor. Just as Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on the disciples, so meaning to reach out to Jesus we need to plug in again to that source of power and strength, we need to be recharged. Just like a lightning conductor.

While I was training – the Training for Learning and Service as it's called, to be a lay preacher. We were sent away one session to be by ourselves – to be quiet. I went out into the garden at the Windermere Centre – it is very beautiful there - very leafy. The birds were singing, but we'd been sent to face our greatest doubts our greatest fear about the very heart beat of faith. And that was a very hard thing to face. We were sent to do it alone. And because you are my family I am prepared to share with you now what that was. It came to me very quickly. As many of you know my husband does not believe in God

and my doubts and my fear was: what if he is right? What if I am wasting my time? All this time I am putting into my studies. All the things I am trying to do. All the time I am spending away from home - away from my family. And so I prayed and I thought and I meditated. And it came to me that it didn't matter because I was sure that what I was doing was right. I was meeting wonderful people. Spending time with people who I grew to love very much and care about and I still pray for – and I know still pray for me. I knew I was doing the right thing. I was going to do it anyway even if Shaun was right - and so doubts and fears can hold us back - if we let them. They can hold us back from joy and from abundant living. They are natural. We all experience them - we should not to be ashamed of them. But we should remember that they can hold us back.

At that point I recalled Carnegie. There are lots of Carnegie halls around the world because he left so much money - his bequests for culture and many different things. But I like this quote of his. It is one answer to the question of doubt in here. He says: Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear do not sit at home and think about it go out and get busy.

So now you know why I'm always busy. Someone asked how I was yesterday. Busy, that's what I am always doing. It is one way of dealing with doubt and fear is to go out and do it. And that's what I did with my lay preaching. After my moment in the garden I just got on and did it. Got the essays done, carried on the studies and put it into practice. Jesus says, "How happy are those who believe without seeing me." And so we are – we are happy because we have our belief in Jesus. And we have his support and his power and his spirit breathed into us every time we plug into the charge.

And in 1 Peter we read "You love him although you have not seen him and you believe in him although you do not now see him. So you rejoice with a great and glorious joy which words cannot express because you are receiving the salvation of your souls, which is the purpose of your faith in him. And so we rejoice today as we did yesterday in our faith in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord.

Amen.

Lingdale

Book Club

The next meeting will be on 3rd June at 7pm when we will be discussing *The Boy with the Top Knot* by Sathnam Sanghera. New members welcome. Books are provided.

Flower Rota

1st June – In memory of Miss J Scarth and Mrs B Waller
8th June – Mr T Waller
15th June – Mrs J Scott
22nd June – Mrs P Green
29th June - Mrs H Dunstan
6th July - Mrs P Griffiths

Community Café

10.30am – 1.00pm every Tuesday

Please note the new time and don't forget if you have any donations for the food bank they can be dropped off at the Café.

Lingdale Calendar

Wed 4 Jun	1.30-3.30pm	Craft and Conversation
Wed 18 Jun	1.30-3.30pm	Craft and Conversation

Weekly

Tuesday	10.00am – 10.30am	Prayers for our Community
	10.30am – 1.00pm	Community Café
3 rd Sunday of the month	6.30pm	Fun and Faith Club at the Manse

St Andrew's

Ladies' Fellowship

The next meeting will be the first week in June for our spring lunch. The date will be announced later.

What is "More than Gold"?

A united Christian outreach event in Stewarts Park on Saturday 5th July from 12 noon to 4.00pm. Plans are in hand to include live music, sports, children's activities, worship, 'Blue Sofa', food, puppet theatre and stalls. Stewards are needed for one our slots. Any offers of help to Eleanor (01642 300546)

Social Committee

The Quiz, Pie and Pea Supper which was to be held on the 24th May has been postponed till later in the year. When the date was decided it wasn't realised that this was the Whit weekend holiday.

Our next event will be the Strawberry Tea on Saturday 5th July at 2.00pm. Tickets £3.00. Proceeds in aid of church funds.

Coffee for Charity

20th April	RVL	£14.50
27th April	RNLI	£19.40
4th May	Rosemary Fund	£20.00
11th May	Boys' Brigade	£12.50

St Andrew's Calendar

Wed 25Jun 1.00 - 3.00pm Knit 'n' Natter

Weekly/Monthly

Third Wednesday 9.30am Church Prayer Group

First Thursday 2.00pm Home Prayer group at 31 Roseberry Mews

Last Sunday After Worship Traid Craft Stall

Boys Brigade Details available from ministers and church elders

Volunteer Drivers Needed

The Live-at-Home Scheme based at Marton Methodist Church urgently needs volunteer minibus drivers to take older folk to and from fortnightly afternoon meetings. The only requirements are to be under 70 years of age and hold a full licence with minibus entitlement (included automatically for those with a licence before 1st January 1997). Margaret Gibson would love to hear from you (tel: 01642 592321).

Grant and Steven's Christian Aid Walk

On Saturday 10th May Grant and I set off on our journey at 5.30a.m. from Marton to Garstang. The roads were not too busy due to the early start. We arrived in Garstang at around 8.a.m. A fellow walker who we have got to know over the years, kindly provided us with bacon and sausage buns-very nice!

We then made our way to the coach for a short journey to Knott-end on Sea where we met up with the walking group. We walked along a coastal path which was very scenic. After a good few miles we all stopped for coffee. The weather was sunny with heavy showers. We continued our walk through

fields, over lots of stiles and along roads. We saw lots of interesting things - water lilies, rhododendron, chrysanthemum, fields of rape seed, house martins, swifts, swallows, gold finch, swans, and weasles. We sheltered for lunch under trees.

Ten of us finished the walk at 4.00p.m.. We walked approx. 15 miles. Grant and I set off home soon after the walk stopping for a bite to eat at the Vintage Hotel. We arrived home at 8.45p.m., tired and damp, yet feeling happy for raising money for a good cause.

Thanks to all who sponsored us. Steven Etwell

Well done Steven and Grant. To date they have raised £100.00 for Christian Aid!!

Redcar

Vintage Afternoon Tea

Saturday, 7th June – 2pm until 4pm

Donations of cakes would be greatly appreciated

Redcar Calendar

Tue 3rd June Craft and Chatter

Sun 22nd June 10.45am Church Meeting

Weekly

Wednesday 11.00am Singing Group in the Church

Thursday 9.30am Prayers

10.00-11.30am Pop-in Centre

2.00pm Thursday People at the home of Catherine
Milburn

Fairly Ancient

I think that the purpose and cause of the incarnation was that God might illuminate the world by His wisdom and excite it to the love of Himself.

Peter Abelard 12th Century

Preachers

	1-Jun	8-Jun	15-Jun	22-Jun	29-Jun
Marton	10.00am Elders Meeting	M Johnson	J Harper Communion	K Harris	
Guisbo	9.30am D Moore Communion		L Bustard	Guis Folk	
Redcar	11.00am J Harper	C Morrison	J Martin	C Morrison Meeting	
Lingdale	5.30pm C Morrison	K Martin Communion	C Morrison plus FAF	K Harris	
					Group Service 10.30am Lingdale

Material for the July & August Magazine to church editors by Sunday 15th June please
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