

Group News



** March * 2013 * March **

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

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Minister

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Dear Friends,

We are now on our way journeying through Lent towards the promised land of Easter, with its resurrection hope. Now many people give things up for Lent – be it chocolate or alcohol or caffeine or biting their nails! But the reality is that when we focus on what we are giving up we often forget to take notice of what Lent and Easter is all about. The giving up becomes a distraction on some level, and we lose sight of the real Lenten journey towards Easter. Jesus himself did give up many things to go out into the desert to prove himself before he began his ministry; he gave up personal comfort, a ready supply of food and water, and he gave up the company of his family and friends. But he ultimately, further down the line, he gave up something more precious still. He gave up his life as he died on the cross.

When you stop to think about Jesus' story where does abstaining from chocolate really become comparable with Jesus' sufferings? How does not having coffee for six weeks really bring us into an understanding of Jesus' journey towards the cross?

You may not be surprised to hear that I have become a bit annoyed over recent years to hear reports from my children that “everyone at school” is giving something up for Lent. Young people who have no connection to any church now see it as something they should be doing in order to earn their chocolate Easter eggs. It is “what everyone does”, thus just what you do at this time of year in the run up to Easter. A test of their inner strength and their ability to resist the temptation to eat what they are denying themselves or a test of their faith? A great example of temptation and resisting temptation it may be, and I would love them all to be doing this out of a desire to grow in themselves a real sense of the difficulties and challenges and temptations that Jesus faced, but I fear not! This seems more to me like the latest fad, the latest fashionable thing to do. And so, strangely, my daughter finds herself, as a church goer, and as a young person growing in her faith, left out of this school ritual. Again what began in the church has become nothing more

than a secular show of abstinence before the Festival of the Easter Bunny.

Now I know that for some Christians giving something up is useful to their journey through Lent challenging them to do without and providing a stimulus for further prayerful reflection at Lent. And I don't mind that at all, and even encourage it – just as long as it helps point the way towards a reflective and prayerful encounter with Jesus in his sufferings and temptations. Jesus was in fact tempted throughout his earthly life and ministry, after all he was human, and even on the night before his death we find Jesus tempted by God's omnipotence, tempted to take the easy way out, praying, "Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me." And yet, still recognising in humility that God his Father knew best, also prayed, "Yet not what I will, but what you will."

We know that Jesus resisted temptation, but I pray that we resist the temptation to take the easy path through Lent, and instead ask God to reveal to us yet more of Jesus, his strengths and his commitment to the world throughout this time of Lent. And I pray that we might be ready to trust God, wherever He wants to send us in response to our prayerful time with Him; ready to accept the challenge of Lent. So enjoy the journey, but don't pack for the journey. Let God lead us where he wants, let God show us what he wants this Lent!

God bless!

Rev Catey Morrison

Group Elders Meeting

The next Group Elders Meeting will be held on Thursday 14th March at 7.30pm at our Guisborough Church, meeting in the church sanctuary. Would anyone with items for the agenda please give them to Catey by 7th March.

Synod Prayers

Prayers for Identity

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 Identity.

3 March

Synod Meeting at Durham this week; Synod Moderator; Synod Clerk; Synod Treasurer

10 March

Thanksgiving for our Reformed Christian heritage

17 March

Waddington Street, Durham; Rev Steven Orange

24 March

Cromer Avenue, Gateshead; Denewell Avenue, Gateshead; Winlinton LEP; Rev Elaine Brown; Revd Gordon Brown

31 March

St Andrew's, Blackhill; Bethel, Chester-le-Street; Christ Church, Stanley; Rev Gordon Brown; Rev Elaine Brown

Modern

We accept the collapse of the fabrics of our old Churches, the thieving of lead and objects from them, the commandeering and butchering of our scenery by the services, the despoiling of landscaped parks and the abandonment to a fate worse than the workhouse of our country houses, because we are convinced we must save money.

John Betjeman English Poet (late 20th Century)

Prayers for the IPM Church in Mozambique:

Pray for the four Presbyterian Societies: Men's, Women's, Youth, and Activists (*young marrieds*) - pray for their leaders and executive members, and for the work of the Societies in each parish.

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.

News from the Persecuted Church

Lift up to the Lord, Ryan Stanten a 16-year-old Christian in Pakistan who has been charged with the country's most serious 'Blasphemy' offense. He was accused of forwarding to Muslim neighbours on October 2012 a text message containing material deemed offensive to Islam. The following day, an angry Muslim mob led by Islamic clerics ransacked the home where Ryan lives with his mother, Rubina Bryan. and set fire to nunneries household items. Ryan was subsequently arrested and charged under section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code, which carries the death penalty for using derogatory remarks against Mohammed. He denies sending the text, and there was no trace on his phone. Pray that our brother will be cleared and that his family will be protected from those who want to cause them harm.

From the Barnabus Fund Prayer diary

Pray that God would give strength to and bring0 justice for Mohammed Ali Dadkhah and other lawyers, activist and journalists who have been jailed in Iran for defending the rights of others.

From the Christian Solidarity Worldwide Prayer diary

Nathan i-pad Appeal

I am sure that you will all agree how much our son Nathan has developed over the last 6½ years that we have been living in the area. He has done amazingly well, learning to walk, and feed himself and understand the world around him, including now being able to watch TV! A real treat for us parents! However it is his speech and language difficulties that continue to be Nathan's biggest issue, and his inability to communicate well in a way that is universally understood, leads to great frustration for Nathan at not being able to communicate all that he wants and needs to communicate. Basically at the age of 8½ he is stuck in the terrible twos, complete with tantrums and lashing out at those around him. Finally we have hope, in the form of an app on an iPad which will speak for him on the press of a button. And we can add to the program the words that Nathan needs to know at that time. The only problem being that of funding. After waiting since last May to no avail, we have made the decision that Nathan can wait no longer and we need to raise the money needed for ourselves. We have been doing really well and friends have been donating to the fund. The aim has been to raise £750-00 for an iPad mini, case, and the necessary software, which is quite expensive in itself. And the good thing is the we are well on our way to achieving this. Basically we have the majority of the money for the iPad, but now need to raise money for the software and strong bump resistant case etc, which is in the region of £300. So that we can get Nathan talking (and it is amazing to see him using the school's iPad!) our children have decided to do a sponsored bike ride to help their brother. On 16th March they hope to do a route of around 15 to 20 miles (route currently undecided), having successfully completed a 10 mile bike ride last year for Catherine Milburn's Teesside Hospice Appeal. And basically they would love your support – whatever little you can give! Can anyone interested in supporting them please give donations to Catey.

Letter from Grandma

The other day I went to the local Christian bookshop and saw a “HONK IF YOU LOVE JESUS” sticker. I had just come from a choir performance, followed by a thunderous prayer meeting, so I bought the sticker and put it in my car. I am *so* glad I did. You see, I was stopped by a red light at a busy crossing, lost in thought about the Lord, and I just didn’t notice that the lights had changed. However, it is a good thing that someone else loves Jesus, because if the driver hadn’t honked I’d never have noticed! Would you believe it?

Lots of people love Jesus! Because while I was waiting there, the man behind me started honking like crazy. Then he leaned out of the window and screamed, “For the love of God, Go, Go!” What a real cheerleader for Jesus. Then everyone started honking, so I leaned out of my window and stated smiling and waving at all those lovely people. I even honked a few times myself to share in the love. There must have been a man from a seaside town there because I heard him yelling about a sunny beach.

I saw another man waving a funny wave, with two fingers stuck up in the air. When I asked my grandson (who was sitting in the back) what that meant, he said he thought it was an Hawaiian good-luck sign or something. Well, I’ve never met anyone from Hawaii, but I thought it would be friendly to lean out of the window and give the man the good-luck sign back. My grandson burst out laughing. Even he was enjoying this wonderful religious experience. A couple of people were so caught up in the joy of the moment that they got out of their cars and started to walk towards me. I bet they wanted to pray with me, but that was when I noticed that the lights had changed, so not wanting to hold everybody up, I smiled and waved goodbye to all my new found sisters and brothers and drove off.

In the mirror I saw that I was the only car to have got across before the lights changed again and I felt vey sad that I had to leave them all behind after all the love we had shared, so I slowed down, leaned out of the window and gave them all the Hawaiian good-luck sign again as I drove away.

All my love darlings, Grandma.

Guisborough

For all who have walked before me
Showing footsteps so I do not stray
I bow my head, I pay my respect
For their guidance on my way
'Reflections in a grave yard' Anne Jarvis

We first came to Guisborough in the early sixties. The Congregational Church was small, not pretty and in need of some serious repair. A lot of people came, looked in, and thought 'Oh dear'. And moved on. We however stayed long enough too talk to the people. There must have been something special about them because fifty years on we are still here. What exactly was it? Many things I suppose. Their resilience was part of it, and a willingness to join in and help when things got difficult.

The difficulty that came up most regularly was shortage of Ministers. Ministers tended to move on every four years or so. And it could take a small church like us up to two years to find a replacement. So how could we manage till then? District would detail the Minister from another church to take communion once a month and preside at meetings.

We also got to know all the Lay preachers from miles around. Some were very good indeed. John Harrison was a sheep farmer from somewhere out in the moors. He got up at five in the morning, did the rounds of his flock, showered had breakfast put on his suit and drove twenty miles to Guisborough. He didn't prepare sermons he said, He just stood up and said what the Lord put in his mind. It was usually pretty inspiring.

At the other extreme was Brian Sandford from St Nicks. He said he liked coming to us. When he preached at another Anglican Church they'd hide the new service books. Brian was an ICI electrical engineer; and a scriptwriter for a scurrilous entertainment called The

Wilton Castle Gentlemen's Smoking Concert. In the C of E he is (was?) on the Diocesan Finance Committee. One of his notable triumphs was to get a really good price from the Ministry of Works for some of the land for the A19. Things like that earned him a CBE and the Archbishop of York's Medal not to mention becoming a Lay Canon. Obviously someone pretty well earthed in reality and it showed in his preaching, No messing about, and straight down the line.

Add in a number of Methodist Organists and one way or another we were very well served.

But we couldn't hope to freeload on other Churches forever. Came the day when Bob MacDonald our church secretary said we really ought to organise a service ourselves every other month at least. And he looked meaningfully round the Elders. Feelings of panic and protests of inadequacy filled the air I can tell you. But it was a case of needs must. The first time any of us stood in the pulpit to deliver a 'reflection' ('sermon' was too scary a word) was quite terrifying. Surprisingly the earth did not open up and swallow us and the Congregation did not walk out in protest.

Gradually we worked out a pattern. The URC service book had an outline of what a service should include. (Did you remember the Lords Prayer? Rather easy to forget).

The prayer handbook provided a theme for each week (bible readings, prayers and reflections). We would quickly agree who would do what. And then the difficult bit – choose the hymns. Everyone has their own ideas about hymns and choosing could develop into quite a bun fight.

I was always amazed (still am) that almost everyone would agree to take on one task or another. And come the day their performance as really good. Much better than I could have done I often thought. The most unlikely people too. The core team was built around the long running bible study group. But there was also the B Team as they called themselves. I recall one time asking them how they

were getting on. 'Wait and see!' I was told and come the day I wondered why I had been so worried.

This only a peep behind the curtain, there's not enough room in the magazine to tell it all and of course I only know a small part of it. But one thing I must say. I started talking about the help we have had over the years from other churches in our group and in the town. I hope we have been able to return the favour to some degree. For many years we have shared organists –that most precious of skills – with other churches. Those with pastoral talents, Donna and Ken take services over a wide area as did Bob Ogilvie before them. And of course Sandra is a one woman social service to many here in town.

Guisborough Calendar

- | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------|--------|--|
| Fri | 1st Mar | 2.00pm | Women's World Day of Prayer Service
hosted by Guisborough URC |
| Wed | 6 th Mar | 2.00pm | Monthly Prayers at 1 Nidderdale Skelton. |
| Thu | 14 th Mar | 7.30pm | Group Elders' meeting at Guisborough |
| Tue | 19 th Mar | 2.30pm | Service at Belmont View Care Home. |
| | | 7.15pm | AGM. |
| Thu | 28 th Mar | 7.00pm | Agape Meal in the hall |
| Good Friday | 10.00am | | Churches Together March of Witness |
| Sat | 6 th Apr | 8.00am | Guisborough hosting the Prayer Breakfast |

Weekly

- | | | |
|-----------|------------------|---|
| Thursdays | 9.30am – 11.45am | Market Day Coffee Morning |
| Thursdays | 11.30am | Quiet Time – prayers and reflections with Catey, Ken, Norma and others. |

That poem I started with reminds me that we are all wayfarers in a great big world. We owe a great deal to those who went before. We owe it to them to give a helping hand to those who will follow. Times are hard, when were they not?

We learned this morning that Mike Thompson has died after a long and useful life. He will be much missed, not least by Freda and their Family It will be a difficult time for them. A time for us all to live up to that reputation for clustering round to help.

God Bless you all

Maureen

AGM Reports

Lent Group

All AGM reports to Joyce Wednesday 6th, 13th & 20th March by Sunday 3rd March please, 7.30pm Lent themed talk, with time ready for printing and circulation prior to the AGM meeting on Tuesday 19th March.

for discussion, on the theme of play- ing our part as church's in the community, to be held at St. Nic's, every Wednesday during Lent.

Guisborough Rotas

	Vestry	Communion Door	Flowers	
3rd March	D Beattie	D Houston	J Basham	D Kane
10th March	J Reynolds		D Moore	M Ward
17th March	M Houston		D Houston	M Sollett
24th March	R Tunnicliffe		B Ward	M Houston
31st March	D Moore		P Etwell	D Harris

Ancient

Just as through a tree we became God's debtors, so through a tree we receive the cancellation of our debts.

Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons, theologian (2nd Century)

Redcar

Easter Coffee morning

23rd March : 10am - noon

Refreshments ~ Cake stall

Everyone wins – egg style!

Guess the weight of the cake

Name the bunny

All are very welcome!!

Lent Group

Thursday 7th, 14th & 21st

7.30pm

Lent themed talk, followed by question time, discussion and refreshments at St. Peter's, Redcar every Thursday during Lent.

Our own Rev. John Durell will be giving the talk on Thursday 14th March on the subject of Palestine and Israel.

Redcar Prayer Pointers

Prayers for the week beginning...

4th March – Pray giving thanks for the whole variety of ways in which our church members and friends serve the local community through countless projects and selfless giving of themselves. And pray that God might bless them in their work.

11th March- Please continue to hold Redcar Survivors of Domestic Abuse in our prayers as they continue the difficult job of seeking funding to pay for the rent for the offices in our church, particularly as their work is expanding at this time.

18th March – Pray for the Food bank as it begins its second month in operation in Redcar and beyond, that the right amount of food will continue to come in, in balance with the needs of those in our community.

25th March – Pray for fresh inspiration as we enter Holy Week this year, and pray that we might be ready to receive all that God wants to give us and show us through the life of Jesus at Easter and beyond.

Jack's Diary

Sincere apologies for my belated New Year best wishes to you all. Now I've got that out of the way let's get down to the important stuff.

I have suffered an indignity and an insult, what was it the vet lady said? 'Jack's head is too small for his body.' Or was it, 'Jack's body is too big for his head?' What an aspersion, how embarrassing and to say it in front of a westie, a boxer and a Labrador all with the right sized heads and bodies of course – in other words I AM FAT!

I have always thought of myself as dark, sleek and handsomely interesting, a bit like Gregory Peck (oh my, someone is showing her age!), but some thing has

to be done, so Catherine and I have decided to diet together, no more shortbread for me and no more crisps for Catherine!

God made us in His image, we are a gift from God, so we should take care of our bodies and even if we don't have the looks of Gregory Peck or Elizabeth Taylor we have living within us the Holy Spirit so that we can let God's light shine and become beautiful naturally.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God. You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.

I Corinthians ch.6 v. 19-20

The Minister's February letter – comments

Catey wrote: 'The feeling of being ready to embrace new times is one which we need to keep hold of,' and we all agree with her.

Yet accepting change is difficult, especially when we've worshipped together in a seemingly

never to be altered way from childhood. Then things alter, perhaps because of advice from the wider Church or perhaps because a new Minister brings in different approaches to worship.

Often it's the changing of words which unsettles us. These may

Redcar Calendar

- Fri 1st Mar 2.00pm Women's World Day of Prayer – Service at Redcar United Reformed Church
- Sun 3rd Mar 12noon following the service, there will be a Fairtrade Coffee Morning, with Fairtrade produce for sale, to celebrate Fairtrade Fortnight.
- Tue 5th Mar 2.00pm Craft and Chatter
- Tue 19th Mar 2.00pm Welcome at Wins at 46, Redcar Lane
- Sat 23rd Mar 10.00am Easter Coffee morning
- Thu 28th Mar 9.30am Maundy Thursday Reflective Service
- Fri 29th Mar 10.00am Good Friday Reflective Service

Weekly

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

come in hymns, in new translations of the Bible or the structure of services.

Some time ago I mentioned that many hymns have the word 'altered' next to them and their number seems to increase.

We know that Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever but that doesn't mean that God can be put into an iron-bound box. For His love attracts us to Him in different ways as we change and develop throughout our lives. For the world with its

people and creation alters as well.

I'll close in a personal and more light hearted way.

At the church which I attended as a boy a sentence from St. Matthew's Gospel was always read before the collection. Perhaps this was to remind the congregation to be generous in their giving. 'Lay not for yourself treasure on earth where moth and rust cloth corrupt and where thieve break in and steal, but lay up for yourself treasure in Heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt and where

thieves do not break in and steal. For where you treasure is there will your heart be also'

True and wise words but many years afterwards I found them used differently.

I was trying to read Herman Melville's long and rather difficult book 'Moby Dick' but only managed the opening chapters. The story is told by a young man who is determined to go on a whaling voyage. It is set in the late nineteenth century and opens in a whaling part in the north east of the U.S.A. He introduces himself with the words, 'Call me Ishmael.'

He gets on board the 'Pequod' to be interviewed by two intimidating characters, retired captains who are now owners of whaling ships.

Ishmael doesn't make a good start for he feels that he should copy their Quaker speech with its thees and it thous. After some time he is ready to sign on but wants to find out what the wage will be.

The profit of the voyage will be shared by the crew with the as yet unknown Captain Ahab receiving the biggest share or lay and Ish-

mael the smallest which will be a two hundredth lay.

Some of the space humour which the book has, lies in this chapter for one of the two retired captains dismisses Ishmael with the words 'Lay not for yourself treasure on earth....'

A twist to this excerpt is that the church I attended all those years ago worked on this lay or share system. It was built during Captain Cook's third voyage, and had thirty two share holders known as proprietors. Some of the pews had gates on them. These were rented out and in good times, dividends were given to the proprietors.

This independent church is that of St Ninian in Baxtergate, Whitby. It was known as a Proprietary Chapel. It's open on Saturdays and is well worth a visit.

Why is it dedicated to St. Ninian, a Celtic saint? Perhaps this is because it was on the boundary between the Celtic and Roman version of Christianity and it was when Hilda was Abbess that the Synod of Whitby was held which decided that the Roman system should become the official one.

John Crowther

Lingdale

Memories Day
Saturday 13th April
10am until 4pm

Easter Eggstravaganza
Sunday 31st March
5.30-7.00pm

Join us for our third Memories Day. Once again Alison Small will be bringing along a selection of the photographs from her Lingdale history web-site, a number of which are new to the site since her last visit in 2008. Yes it really is that long since the last one!

Crafts, biscuit decorating, worship, hot cross buns, prayer, coffee and tea, egg decorating, and of course, an Easter egg hunt!!!

Come along for a time of relaxed worship and Easter Activities in our Café! Everyone welcome to come and celebrate Easter with us!

Lingdale Prayer Pointers

4th March – Pray for all who are new to the village and still finding their feet and trying to make friends. May they find themselves at home in the village.

11th March - Pray for people who want to pray! Lord show us how we need to build a foundation of prayer for our church and for everything we do as a church.

18th March – Pray for all who are in need in our village, particularly those who are struggling with money right now and don't know where to turn.

25th March – Pray for our Easter Eggstravaganza on Easter Sunday, that it might be a true celebration of the good news of Easter, bringing good news to our community.

Craft and Conversation

The next chance to bring your knitting, sewing, embroidery, card making, paints or just yourself for a social afternoon is Wednesday 13th March from 1.30-3.30pm, and then Wednesday 27th March and every two weeks from there on.



Book Club

The next meeting will be on 5th March at 7pm when we will be discussing *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Hosseini Khaled. A story about the relationship between two women whose friendship grows as deep as the bond between sisters and as strong as the ties between mother and daughter.

Lingdale Calendar

Tue 5th March	7.00pm	Book Club
Wed 13th March	1.30pm	Craft and Conversation
Sun 17 th March	6.30-8.30pm	F.A.F. Club meets at the Lingdale Manse (Ring Catey for information)
Fri 29th March	10.30am	Good Friday Reflective Prayer Service
Wed 10th April	7.00pm	Annual General Meeting. All welcome

Weekly

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

Pancake Supper and Quiz

Thank you to everyone who attended our pancake supper and quiz, well done to the Dimwits for winning the quiz on the second tie break! Over £60 was raised for Christian Aid.

Flower Rota

3rd March – Mrs J Scott
10th March – Mrs P Green
17th March - Mr A Thompson
24th March – Mrs H Dunstan
31st March – Mrs P Griffiths
7th April – Miss S Griffiths

St Andrew's

Women's World Day of Prayer

**Friday 1st March at 2.00pm.
St Andrew's URC**

The speaker will be the Rev
Meg Robb.

Refreshments will be served after the service. Please come along and join us.

Coffee Morning

**Thursday 14th March
10.30am - 12noon**

Una and Joan are hosting a coffee morning at 8 Towthorpe, Nunthorpe. Tickets £2.00 available from Una, Joan, Doreen, Sheila and Joan S. Proceeds in aid of church funds.

Get Well Soon

We send our good wishes to Una for a speedy recovery after her recent spell in hospital. Get well soon Una.

Ladies Fellowship

At our last meeting of the Ladies Fellowship on 6th February. Mr P Sotheran led us in a "*Call My Bluff*" Quiz. I'm afraid we didn't do very well but we had some fun. Thank you Peter.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 6th March at 7.30pm when Jimmy Anderson will be giving us a slide show on "*Orkney and Shetland*".

All welcome.

Coffee for Charity

13 Jan	Boys' Brigade	£20.00	3 Feb	Daisy Chain	£30.00
20 Jan	Elmridge	£15.90	10 Feb	Boys' Brigade	£18.34
27 Jan	Teesside Hospice	£18.00			

St Andrew's Calendar

Sun 3rd Mar	10.00am	Annual General Meeting
Wed 6th Mar	7.30pm	Ladies Fellowship
Wed 27 Mar	1-3pm	Knit and Natter - All welcome.
	2.30pm	Service at Kirkley Lodge
Wed 10th Apr	7.30pm	Elders 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

	3-Mar	10-Mar	17-Mar	24-Mar	Easter
Marton	10.00am C Morrison Meeting	J Griffiths Parade	L Bustard Communion	C Morrison	N Johnson Communion
Guibo	9.30am D Harris Communion	D Moore	C Morrison	K Harris	C Morrison Communion
Redcar	11.00am N Johnson Communion	C Eddowes	C Morrison	J Harper	C Morrison Communion
Lingdale	5.30pm C Morrison	K Harris Communion	C Morrison plus FAF	C Morrison	C Morrison Eggestravaganza

Material for the April Magazine to church editors by Sunday 17th March please
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