

Group News



** March * 2014 * March **

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

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Minister

Rev Catey Morrison, 2 Stanghow Road, Lingdale (01287 651926)

catey@eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Dear Friends,

Will somebody please explain to me how we have managed to make it into March? I realise that time is meant to pass by ever more quickly the older you get but I didn't realise that the fast forward button got pressed the year we turn 40. And no I am not that old yet, but sadly later in the year the horror of being so old will come to me!!! Although as one church member said to me recently - 'I didn't realise you were still so young!' All I can say is that something must have happened to me over the last few years to age me, as before then I was still getting comments of not looking old enough to be a minister!!!

But that is not what I wanted to help you all think about, for those are just the mumblings of someone beginning to feel their age... what I wanted to encourage you all to begin to think about was our journey once again towards Easter, beginning with the period of 40 days of preparation for Easter which we commonly know of as Lent, which commences in a mere few short days. Easter is late this year (20th April to be precise) so Lent has not commenced in February as it often does. But 4th March is Shrove Tuesday, so enjoy those indulgent pancakes in the next few days, before our thoughts turn to more difficult times, towards the events leading up to Easter and what we need to be doing this year in the way of our preparations for our part in the Easter story. For we all have a part in that story, as the ones who sent Jesus to the cross none-the-less through our sins, but also as the ones who know his redemptive resurrection power!

Our Lenten reflections may take many forms, but often our thoughts turn to the preparations Jesus himself made for setting out into ministry, his forty days spent in Judean wilderness. We meditate upon the temptations he must have faced as in hunger and thirst he heard voices tempting him to take the easy path, to prove his divinity! But this testing would have hurt the human side of

who he was more than the divine! Perhaps he needed to test out this human side of him, to discover whether his human side was strong enough to carry out the Godly plans for his life?! What we will discover again this Lent is that Jesus did overcome temptation then and on many subsequent occasions, and exited the wilderness even stronger, ready now to take the path of life which would ultimately lead to his death, his death on the cross.

For those who would like to do something a little different in their Lenten reflections this year, I invite you all not to give something up for Lent, but to take something up. I invite you to join me in picking up a book called '24 Hours That Changed the World' by Adam Hamilton. You can order it on Amazon (other book stores are available!), and if you need help ordering a copy or don't have a computer or a good bookshop to hand, then just ask me and I will be happy to place an order for you. And if you would like to be part of a book group to discuss the book then you have the option of joining me at the manse on Wednesday evenings throughout Lent at 7.15pm or on a Thursday afternoon, 2pm-4pm, at 42, Westfield Avenue, Redcar, which is the home of Catherine Milburn. I realise that there are lots of other possibilities for Lent, in the form of Ecumenical Lent Groups, so please don't feel pressured. But I thoroughly recommend this book, whether you just buy it to read at your leisure, after Easter even (?!), follow a chapter a week with me and others at the book groups, or opt for the '40 days of Reflection' version, which gives you daily thought provoking reflections for each day of Lent following the same themes.

Do it your way! Do something different?! But make the most of Lent, so that we can gain the most out of Easter and God's plan to bring hope, love, grace and peace to our world!

God bless fellow Lenten travelers!

Rev Catey Morrison

Synod Prayers

- 2nd March Women's World Day of Prayer this week, Waddington Street, Durham; Revd Steven Orange
- 9th March St Andrew's, Blackhill; Bethel, Chester-le-Street; Christ Church, Stanley; Rev Gordon Brown; R e v Elaine Brown
- 16th March Synod Meeting at St. Andrew's, Monkseaton this week; Synod Moderator Rev Lis Mullen; Synod Clerk Mrs Melanie Campbell; Synod Treasurer Mr Danny Pigeon
- 23rd March St Cuthbert's Centre, Holy Island; its visitors and its management team; Warden Rev Rachel Pullman
- 30th March Mothering Sunday, PCM (Mozambique): The churches of the southernmost presbyteries centred on the capital, Maputo; the English language service at the central church at Khovo; Darlington Methodist District Chair Rev Ruth Gee

The last Sunday of each month is now set aside to pray for ecumenical partners in our region and our partner church, the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique (PCM).

Manse Prayers

Manse prayers are at Ken Harris's 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.

Prayer Pointers for March

- 3rd March Pray for the Elders in our four churches as they meet up this week on Thursday evening for their quarterly meeting. Pray that there might be unity in vision for the Group, as we continue to grow together discovering better ways of working that will make it easier for us all.
- 10th March Pray for all those choosing to give up something or take up something this Lent. Lord may we all make the time to reflect further over these coming weeks of Lent, praying that we increase our understanding of what you came to do in our world and in our lives.
- 17th March Pray for the AGM church meetings happening around this time that we might take heart in what we have achieved over the last year and look with hopeful excitement to the future that God intends for our churches.
- 24th March Pray for all those who have been so badly affected by floods in various parts of the country in these last few months. After so long under water we pray for families and communities trying to begin to plan the way forward the regain their homes and local facilities washed out by the flood waters. Keep in prayer those whose livelihoods have been affected.
- 31st March As the days lengthen may our hearts lighten and may we feel more confident to go out and visit others in the church and in our communities and be used by God in this way.

News from the Persecuted Church

Pray for the distraught wife and two sons of Debalel, A Christian Leader in Nepal who was murdered when *he* responded to a request for prayer. He was called in the early hours of 20 October last year to the home of a Hindu family to whom he had been witnessing; a 29-year old man claimed that he needed prayer for healing and deliverance. While Debalel was praying, the Hindu left the room and returned with an iron rod and a sharp, curved knife. He beat the Christian with the rod before slitting his throat. pray for strength and peace for the bereaved family.

Praise god that even as persecuted Christians continue to suffer horrific violence at the hands of Islamists, other Muslims are standing in solidarity with our brother and sisters. Muslims in Egypt helped to protect Christians and churches from attacks by supporters of the Muslim brotherhood. And following the September suicide bombing at all saints church in Peshawar, Pakistan Muslims rushed to donate 400 pints of blood to help save the injured and later joined Christians in forming symbolic human chains of protection around churches. Official recognition of the plight of Arab Christians is also growing. King Abdullah of Jordan convened a conference in September last year that addressed the marginalisation and persecution of Christians in the middle east and north Africa. Pray that these peaceable influences will prevail over the agenda of Muslims who seek to harm Christians.

From the Barnabus Fund Prayer Diary www.barnabusfund.org

Synod

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

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. Due to Catey having a small operation St Andrew's first presentation is to now take place on 9th March during the parade service. Please see the preaching plan for when these special services are going to be held in your church. If you miss the one at your church you may like to catch it another of the churches within the Group or you can always ask me to bring my laptop to your house for those who can't get out so much now.

Lent Book Group

Catey would like to invite anyone who is interested to join her in reading a book this Lent entitled '24 Hours That Changed the World' by Adam Hamilton. This is a really accessible and interesting look at the events of the last 24 hours of Jesus' life. You may like to read this book in the run up to Easter or later on, but if you would like to read it a chapter each week and discuss it with Catey and others there are two possible book groups for you to attend. One is to be held at the manse on Wednesday evenings starting Wednesday 5th March at 7.15pm. The other one is on Thursday afternoons at 2.00pm at Catherine Milburn's house (42, Westfield Avenue, Redcar). Please feel free to join either group or just read the book on your own. Alternatively the book is available as '24 Hours That Changed the World: 40 Days of Reflections' with short daily reflections on the same them for each day of Lent. If you need help ordering the books, I can always place an order for you on Amazon. Please make use of these and other ecumenical opportunities to explore our faith this Lent.

From Our Group Administrator

Hello, I would like to introduce myself and give a little insight to my new role as Group Administrator.

My name is Dorothy McSherry and I have been a member at Red-car Church for several years now. I have taken up this role as it is a new post and I have worked in administrative roles for well, shall we say 30 years and a bit more. This is in various departments so I would like to think I have a lot to offer the role in supporting Catey, the Group Elders and indeed everyone within the churches.

The Job, includes the following:

- To support the Minister by taking on routine tasks, liaising pastoral concerns, to support the Minister and church secretaries.
- Prepare the preaching plan
- Arrange travel for people when required
- Attend meetings and take minutes and circulate them.
- To carry out any admin functions which supports the churches and its members.

This list is not exhaustive and the above is just the start. Please feel free to contact me if you think I may be of help. I am open to suggestions and would love to hear from people. I will attend all the churches and introduce myself in person very soon.

If you need any help or have any suggestions you can get in touch by e-mail at McSherryandrew@googlemail.com

Dot

Ancient

How will you love him who so loved you first? Why, in loving him you will be an imitator of his kindness. And do not marvel that a human being can imitate God. By the will of God he can

Diognetus (Epistle to) 2nd century

United Reformed Church Youth Assembly 2014

The URC Youth Assembly was a gathering of young people aged 13-26 from all 13 Synods across the United Kingdom. The Assembly was held on 24th-26th January, whilst you lot were all drinking tea, reading the newspapers, having a lovely relaxing weekend and going to church. For the whole weekend we were busy at Alrewas in Staffordshire learning more about faith and God, and making decisions about important issues. And we were the only young adults to attend from the Northern Synod!

The main theme of the weekend was, 'Lost and Found, people in exile'. This theme was to be interpreted in whichever way suited you the most. For example, for some people the theme meant 'lost in faith and found again', but for others it meant 'lost altogether, and found by God'. Over the course of the weekend we were exploring the idea of exile, the times when we feel lost or found, the times when God feels close or far away, and how the idea of exile still has a lot to teach us about God and ourselves.

The weekend also consisted of many fun and yet serious activities such as, worship, communion, small group work and various workshops. The choice of workshops were topics entitled 'Creative', 'Practical', 'Spiritual' and 'Emotional'.

In the 'Creative' workshop you could do anything you liked from drama, singing, craft or art, creative writing and storytelling. Each of these were linked to the main theme, 'Lost and found'. In the 'Practical' workshop you could attend either a discussion on 'Outreach and Peer Evangelism', or 'Action for God'. For the 'Spiritual' workshop, you had the choice to attend, 'Found by God' or 'God's Backpack'. We both attended 'God's backpack' and found it to be really useful. It explored different ways of praying and different types of prayer and reflection.

In the 'Emotional' workshop you could explore either 'Finding Yourself Out of Control' or look at 'What's on Your Mind'. Both of these were linked to finding help and healing in

times of mental distress or illness. Both of us agree that the workshops we attended were very interesting and inspiring, and will definitely help us at some point during our journey through life and faith.

Our overall experience at the Youth Assembly in Alrewas was that it was exciting, fun, educational, inspiring, interesting and was a time to make new friends within the church, and was a chance to get closer to God. We both agreed that it was interesting seeing the wide variety of people that attended the event. There were many Christians that attended, but also some non-Christians and Quakers came too. We found it really interesting listening to their religious views, and hearing their experiences of life. It's quite extraordinary how similar some peoples faith can be to our own.

During the course of the weekend, we all had the chance to express our views on various matters and suggest our ideas to the national church, to FURY (Fellowship of United Reformed Youth) and the URC Mission Council. We felt that this was great because as young adults we could express what we thought was good or what we thought could be improved to benefit the URC.

The URC Youth Assembly 2014 was a great event, and we would really recommend to any other young people in our churches across Northern Synod who have an interest in their faith and the church. We would definitely recommend that you go with us next year.

May the Lord be with you!

Joshua Morrison and Jade Moodie

Youth House Party Barnes Close, near Birmingham

On the 24th January I went to Barnes Close Retreat Centre, near Birmingham, for a Youth House Party for the weekend with other Christians my age. I

didn't know anyone when I got there, but I soon got talking to a girl called Xyiena and became friends with the other young people. There were about a

dozen of us there in total. The weekend was largely about having fun together, getting to know each other, as well as exploring the good and bad things that are happening in the world at the moment. To do this we began by looking in newspapers for articles that helped us to understand and explore this. We also talked together about what we had found with Ian Ring, the leader of the Youth House Party.

At the weekend we also watched a Mr Bean film which I really enjoyed. We also played games together and did baking as well! My group baked cookies and the other group made muffins. We ate these while we sat and continued to think more about the main theme for the weekend. We were encouraged to share

our own thoughts about what we had read in the newspapers, and we discussed whether or not we agreed.

We also went for a walk into the country park behind the centre, but unfortunately we had to turn back because it started to thunder and hail on us. I needed a shower to warm up when I got back! Then there was time to chill out together as well.

Overall I had such a great weekend and made some great friends and thoroughly enjoyed myself. It is definitely worth going to youth events/camps because you can express your faith without being judged and learn more about your faith.

Abigail Morrison

Guisborough

A short book review.

At the same time as ordering the 2014 Prayer Handbook, I came across some promotional material for another Granary URC publication, ' **Surprised by Grace, parables and prayers**'.

The author is Susan Durber, a URC minister familiar to many as an editor of the prayer handbook in previous years. I have been attracted to her prayers published over earlier years because they have spoken to me as

being deeply meaningful, lightly structured and uncluttered with unnecessary decorative language.

In this new book, she retells some familiar parables, reflects on them and then prays with the reader.

According to the blurb – *'hearing one (a parable), should be like hearing the best kind of stand up comedian, who breaks open all your pretensions and shows you the truth about yourself and how things are'*

The Growing Seed; Mark 4: 26-29 is the one I read this morning.

There are a number of similar stories about growth, seeds and sowers but this one wasn't one that I can remember hearing before. In fairness, it is rather a statement of a process familiar to anyone who has at some time hopefully put seeds in the ground, rather than a story.

In her commentary, Susan Durber points this out going on to say that the gardener, having done the planting job, is seen as playing no further part in the process, sitting in the sun with a coffee until harvest time!

What is going on underground of course is due to the wonders of nature – something amazing and life giving which the author relates to the concept of grace.

There is here the difficult dilemma, highlighted in all of the committed work within our church communities. Sometimes the progress of God's kingdom on earth is not dependent upon what we plan or do.

The related prayer following the commentary is a prayer of thanks, humbly acknowledging God's plan being worked out in the natural world and in us all, without our knowledge.

Can I recommend this book to you as an excellent support to private prayer time.

The commentary finishes with these sentences to which I want to add Amen.

... 'the kingdom of God will come but (not) because we strive for it. It will come because God brings it Some things happen in ways other than through our action. Thank goodness and thank God.'

Joyce Basham

Guisborough Calendar

Fri 7th Mar 7.00pm Woman's World Day of Prayer, service in our church.

Tue 18th Mar 2.30pm Belmont Care Home service

Weekly

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

Guisborough Rota

	Vestry	Communion	Door	Flowers
2 nd March	D Beattie	D Houston	J Basham	D Kane
9 th March	J Reynolds		D Moore	M Ward
16 th March	M Houston		D Houston	M Sollett
23 rd March	R Tunnicliffe		B Ward	D Cross
30 th March	D Beattie		P Etwell	K Harris

Guisborough Choral Society Presents:

Spring Concert

Saturday 29th March at 7.30pm
 St. Nicholas Church, Guisborough

The Choir will be singing

Pergolesi's Stabat Mater

Haydn's Mass in B flat major
Schöpfungsmesse, or 'Creation Mass'

Featuring Andrew Christer on organ
 and four guest solo singers

Tickets are available from March 8th from Guisborough Bookshop; Greensleeves Music (both in Chaloner St., Guisborough); wegottickets.com; or on the door. Prices are £10, £8 concessions, £1 under-19s. Further information 0790 55 22 918

Redcar

Prayerful Thoughts

Sweet Jesus how that poor little creature suffered as it lay dying in her lap, its life painfully drifting away.

I pray that when the person who devised that dreadful disease stands before you Lord Jesus, they say how sorry they are.

1st Timothy ch 4 & 5.

Everything that God has created is good, nothing is to be rejected, but everything is to be received with a prayer of thanks.

For it is hallowed and consecrated by the Word of God and by prayer.

Catherine Milburn

Redcar Calendar

Sun	2 nd Mar	11.45am	The Annual General Meeting at
Thu	6 th Mar	7.30pm	Group Elders meeting at Guisborough
Tue	4 th Mar	2.00pm	Craft and Chatter
Tue	18 th Mar	2.00pm	Welcome at Wins

Weekly

Wednesday	11.00am	Singing Group
Thursday	9.30am	Prayers
	10.00-11.30am	Pop-in Centre
	2.00pm	Thursday People – Bible Study at the home of Catherine Milburn.

Thanks from:- Commitment for Life

Mrs Evelyn Robertson has received a letter of thanks from Commitment for Life for the donations our church has given - the following is an extract from it:

Thank you so much for your kind donation of £75 to Commitment for Life and for the work of your congregation in support of the programme as part of the mission of your church. This brings your yearly total to £223. We very much appreciate your continued generosity. It enables us to maintain the funds for Christian Aid's work in the four partner countries and the work of the World Development Movement in campaigning for justice and change.

Over the 20years that Commitment for Life has been a running programme, countless developments and improvements have taken place. This support has enabled so many people and communities to help themselves out of poverty by learning new skills for work, education, health care, business and politics.....

Thanks for:- Church Flowers

It is always lovely to come into Church on Sundays and see the lovely flowers on or beside the Communion Table. Norma Creek would like to thank people for contributing to this either in memory of a loved family member or friend, or occasionally to mark a special celebration. If you would like to contribute to this it can be done in two ways; buy and put the flowers in Church yourself or donate some money and Norma will arrange the flowers for you. If you are interested please write your name on the flower rota list in the corridor or see Norma.

Thanks

Elaine

Getting the Balance Right

I enjoyed reading Mr Robertson's article last month and agree that the Church does put too much emphasis on Christmas. Yet the commercial world seeking to make a profit starts its publicity in October when shops set out their Christmas displays.

We may wonder how the people in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and South America adjust to this publicity. For, it is their mid-summer and the month of the lightest and longest days. Yet Christmas trees, with lights and decorations, will still be put up, and rich filling and hot food eaten by those willing to observe the old traditions. The festival in the southern hemisphere will be kept largely in the sun, on a beach or in the countryside.

But change comes and traditions begin to be forgotten. For instance I find it disappointing that in Redcar the Procession of Witness no longer moves along the High Street on Good Friday and the fellowship with hot cross buns and drinks no longer happens at its end. Yet other towns in our area still have their processions.

In the nineteenth century the Salvation Army used the popular mu-

sic of the time to set the words of their songs to. They said that: 'The devil should not have all the best tunes.' This idea has been revived as many religious songs use music in the modern style with raised arms and some clapping in the appropriate places. But change is not always accepted by everyone, and we are familiar with such phases as 'Happy Clappy' or 'Trendy Vicar.'

But the commercial world doesn't hesitate to use a religious idea and adapt it to make a profit. Advent Calendars for children appear at the end of November. Some have pictures of the presents which the children may hope to get, behind the numbered doors and the chocolate treats but the Christmas message with its picture is not there.

Mr Robertson's article ends with the words 'we now look forward to Easter, our main celebration,' for we know that without Easter, Christmas would be hardly celebrated.

An interesting question which I do not know the answer to is: 'How far does Islam celebrate the birth of its prophet?'

John Crowther

Lingdale

Community Café

10.30am – 1.00pm every Tuesday

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

Book Club

The next meeting will be on 4th

March at 7.00pm when we will be discussing *The News Where*

You Are by Catherine O'Flynn.

New members welcome.

Lingdale Boys Brigade

The newly created Boys Brigade at Lingdale is in urgent need of volunteers to staff it. This is a plea to those in the other churches in case anyone is able to give up just one Wednesday evening a month even to help out on a rota basis. The Boys Brigade is needed in the village as there is no other organised activities outside the work of the school for primary school aged children. Even though we only began in September we now have around one third of the school attending and it is the talk of the school so the Head Teacher informs me! Please speak to Catey if you are interested in lending a hand!

Lingdale Calendar

Wed 5th Mar 1.30-3.30pm Craft and Conversation Meeting

Wed 19th Mar 1.30-3.30pm Craft and Conversation Meeting

Weekly

Tuesday 10.00am – 10.30am Prayers for our Community

10.30am – 1.00pm Community Café

3rd Sunday of the month 5.30pm Family Service followed by a Youth Meeting at the Manse

Fun And Faith Club

The FAF club will be happening on the fourth Sunday in the month during February and March (ie 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. (Please contact Catey for further information or for a lift.)

Flower Rota

- 9th March – Mr B Dove
- 16th March – Mrs M Saunders
- 23rd March – In memory of Miss J Scarth and Mrs B Waller
- 30th March – Mr T Waller
- 6th April – Mrs J Scott

If anyone would like to provide flowers for the rota, either on a regular basis or to mark a special occasion or anniversary, please contact Susan on 654093.

St Andrew's

Women's World Day of Prayer

**St Bernadette's Church
Nunthorpe
Friday 7th March, 2014
2.00pm.**

Refreshments will be served after the service. Please do come along and join in the service prepared by the Christian women of Egypt.

Coffee Morning

There will be a coffee morning at 8, Towthorpe, Nunthorpe on Thursday 13th March 10.30am to noon. Raffle, bring and buy stall and of course coffee etc.

Tickets £2.00 available from Doreen, Sheila or Joan S. Proceeds in aid of church funds.

Ladies' Fellowship

The Ladies' Fellowship had a lovely meeting on the 4th Feb. when Pat Martin showed slides of her involvement, together with five colleagues, in the arrangement of the flowers in Westminster Abbey for the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Lovely!

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 11th March 1.30 to 3.00pm when Jimmy Anderson will be giving a slide show of his recent trip to the Holy Land. All welcome.

Wednesday Prayers

The next Wednesday Prayers are to be held on Wednesday 19th March at 9.30am. Please come along and join in this short service. Coffee is served afterwards.

Coffee for Charity

12 th Jan	Rosemary Fund	£15.00
26 th Jan	Teesside Hospice	£16.00
2 nd Feb	Leprosy Mission	£19.80
9 th Feb	Boys' Brigade	£17.28

St Andrew's Calendar

Wed 26th March 1.00 - 3.00pm Knit 'n' Natter - Please do come along to knit, natter or both.

Weekly

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

Modern

Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive.

C S Lewis mid 20th Century.

Preachers

	2-Mar	9-Mar	16-Mar	23-Mar	30-Mar
Marton	10.00am K Harris	C Morrison Parade, Sab Pres	J Harper Communion	C Morrison AGM	K Williamson Mother's Day
Guisbo	9.30am C Morrison Communion	N Johnson	C Morrison Sabbatical Pres	K Harris	D Moore Mother's Day
Redcar	11.00am C Morrison Communion	J Harper	C Morrison Sabbatical Pres	N Johnson	J Martin Mother's Day
Lingdale	5.30pm J Coulthard	C Morrison Communion	J Coulthard	C Morrison Sab Pres, FAF	K Harris Mother's Day

Material for the April Magazine to church editors by Sunday 16th March please
 Group Editor – R Wheeler, 2C Gypsy Lane, Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough, TS7 0DX.
 Telephone: 01642 300546.
 Email: roger.wheeler5@virginmedia.com