

Group News



** March * 2017 * March **

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

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Dear Friends,

As I lead Sunday worship around our Synod, I am struck by the adaptability and creativity of local congregations enabling sustainable ways forward. Was it ever thus? – nothing stays the same for long. The mission context of our existing congregations is changing; the culture of which we are part is forever changing; legislation and health and safety understandably requires changes to how we undertake church programmes and the buildings we use.

As a Synod, we cannot do much about the immediate situation of a shortage of stipendiary ministers of the Word and Sacrament. It is a situation most Christian congregations are facing in the British Isles. What we can do is accept and embrace that fact, and re-think how we are to look to the gifts and leadership to be nurtured and released from within our existing congregations. We already have an ordained local leadership team in most of our churches: the Elders. As a Synod, we are continuing to explore The Way Forward: taking a fresh look at groups and the pooling of resources, at how we can form team ministries across new groups of congregations. Just as previous generations of Christians have worked out new ways of being and ‘doing’ church, it is our turn now.

We already have all we need to be the people of God – with a minister or not, with a building or not, with money in the bank or not – through maintaining our fellowship and worship, through nurturing one another in the faith, and encouraging one another in our shared ministry and response to God’s call together. God is not calling us into being disciples and leaving us without the necessary spiritual resources when we say ‘Yes!’ in response; this is The Way Forward for all

God's people in the life of the Church. Always has been, and always will be. We are a part of that rich stream of faith, and are already fulfilling much of what God is calling us to be; but, of course, there is always so much more to do and learn and change along the way, however long we have been Christians, and whatever our age.

These are exciting times, an era of dynamic change across our nation's churches: just as the journey with Jesus has always been, and always will be. I am looking forward to continuing to explore The Way Forward with people across Northern Synod through the coming year.

As ever, and in Christ,

David
Synod Moderator

Extract from Synod News

Inspiration in Your Inbox

Every day of the year, early each morning, the URC sends out, by email, a Daily Devotion consisting of a reading, reflection and short prayer. You can read them on your computer, phone, or tablet and they provide inspiration in your inbox! The Devotions are written by a team of over 90 people from a range of perspectives and places within the URC. If you would like to receive them you can sign up by going to

<http://tinyurl.com/URCDailyDevotions>

and filling in the form.

E A P P I

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel

I am sure that you have heard of the West Bank - the land to the west of the River Jordan, east of Israel, where the majority of Palestinians live: but did you know that this pie of land is only the size of Northumberland? It is separated from Israel by the barrier, 9 metres high in places, built on the Palestinian land and increasingly taken over by the Settlements - new houses built for Israelis. Motorways link the settlements which Palestinians are not permitted to use, built on farms where ancient olive trees have been cut down and bulldozed..

Have you heard of EAPPI? This initiative was taken by the World Council of Churches in response to a request from Churches in Jerusalem, to create a protective presence. In this country it is managed by Quaker Peace and Social Witness jointly with Churches Together.

The speaker at the meeting at St George's Hartlepool was Andy Lie, the Synod Ecumenical officer who visited Bethlehem for three months as an observer to monitor human rights abuses and report to the UN. This was not the Bethlehem of the Christmas cards, but in fact a vast concrete checkpoint to allow Palestinians to go through the barrier to work and to gain access to education and medical facilities in Israel. It often takes three hours to get through the checkpoint, queuing patiently, and glad of the presence of an observer as a protection.

The observers, who go through an intensive training course before they are allowed to go, are usually stationed at checkpoints and school gates where students go to school under the watchful eye of Israeli soldiers and are at risk of violence from the settlers. The observers also support the marginalised groups of Israeli activists working for peace, who help to monitor checkpoints and are willing to be interviewed by the media.

Pray for the difficulties of this precious place - the land where Jesus lived. Pray for the work for peace which is going on and for the Israelis who are brave enough to stand against their government. And if you do see Palestinian Olive oil, please buy it.!

Jane Tomlin

Synod Prayers

- 5th March: Synod Meeting at West End URC on the 11th
Our Synod Moderator, Revd Dave Herbert;
Synod Clerk, Mrs Melanie Campbell;
Synod Treasurer, Revd Dr Tony Haws
for Lent which begins this week as we prepare for
Easter
- 12th March: St Cuthbert`s Centre, Holy Island;
its visitors and management team;
Warden of the Centre, Revd Rachel Poolman
- 19th March: St George`s URC, High Heaton:
St Cuthbert`s LEP(Methodist/URC), Heaton;
Revd Dr Grant Wilson
Mothering Sunday on 26th and for mothers every-
where
- 26th March: PCM, its congregations in and around the capital,
Maputo
Darlington Methodist Chair, Revd Ruth Gee

Guisborough

Not long before Christmas I was fortunate to meet and talk to Jamie Andrews, a Scottish mountaineer, at a mountaineering festival in Dundee. Fourteen years ago Jamie and a friend became stranded on Les Droites, a mountain in the Alps. Contrary to the forecast, the weather turned bad on the second day of the climb, but they pushed on to the summit. It was a misjudgement. Due to exceptional snow and wind they were unable to descend and were forced to bivouac on the ridge with temperatures of -30 degrees C and winds of 80 mph. They had provisions for one day but the storm lasted 4 days and frostbite inevitably set in. On the evening of the fourth day a rescue helicopter got within metres but had to abort due to wind. That night Jamie's companion died. Jamie was surprised to find that he was still alive the next morning and the helicopter returned and just managed to take him off. His feet and hands were frozen solid and had to be amputated. For most people this would have been devastating and the end of climbing but 18 months later he walked up Ben Nevis and a few years later he was back climbing. In 2013 he climbed it to within 150 metres of the top of the Matterhorn but had to give up. In summer 2016 on his second attempt he made it all the way. He doesn't own up to any overt religious beliefs but simply makes the point that all human beings have huge inner resources to call on.

By chance, at the same time, I happened to be re-reading John Robinson's classic 'Honest to God' published in 1963. (John Rob-

	Vestry	Communion	Door	Flowers
5 th March	M Houston		J Reynolds	D Kane
12 th March	R Tunnicliffe	D Beattie	M Burrows	M Ward
19 th March	B Ward		D Thompson	J Reynolds
26 th March	D Moore		B Ward	M Houston
2 nd April	J Reynolds		D Beattie	M Baird

Guisborough Calendar

Tue 14th March 7.15pm Church Meeting & AGM
Wed 15th March 7.00pm Group Elders Meeting

Weekly

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

inson was the Bishop of Woolwich). The Bible speaks of a God ‘up there’. Perhaps the picture of a three-decker universe ‘the heaven above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth’ was once taken literally, but no longer. The New Testament has Jesus ascending into heaven and descending into hell. We still cling to an image of ‘an old man in the sky’. But our understanding of cosmology means that we know that God isn’t ‘out there’ in that sense. My meeting Jamie Andrew made me reflect that perhaps God is the inner resource within us all.

Myth is a hugely valuable means of expressing truths (put to one side the modern misuse of the word myth being taken to imply an untruth). Much of the Bible is based on myth. The Jews as well as the Greeks and Romans used myth extensively to understand the world. One of John Robinson’s points is that in today’s church we have forgotten that myth is a tool to aid understanding and not in itself factually true. It is not surprising then, according to Robinson, writing in 1963, that the church’s teaching, as we know it, has become less relevant or irrelevant to thinking people and that the church will continue to decline. Christianity must not and should not be about believing a list of impossible or improbable things.

I was reading ‘Honest to God’ in the run up to Christmas and it was a good antidote to many aspects of Christmas in the form we celebrate it both inside the church and outside. Here is a brief passage from Robinson: *“The very word ‘incarnation’ (which of course is not a biblical term) conjures up the idea of a divine substance being plunged in flesh and coated with it like chocolate. And if this is a crude picture, substitute for it that of the Christmas collect, which speaks of the Son of God ‘taking our nature upon him’, or that of Wesley’s Christmas hymn, with its ‘veiled in flesh the Godhead see.’ ”*

James Robertson

Redcar

Easter Coffee Morning

On Saturday, 1st April we will be hosting an Easter Coffee Morning from 10am until 12noon. Refreshments include tea / coffee and Hot Cross Bun. Donations please on the day for the cake stall and donations for an Easter themed Tombola (plants, bulbs, chocolate etc)



Date for your diary

would be Rita has organised a concert by the Shiny Row greatly ap- Choir and the Middleton Choir to be held on March preciated. 4th in our Church, please contact Rita for tickets or Thank you. more information.

Redcar Calendar

Sun 12th March 11.45am The Annual General Meeting
Tue 7th March 2.00pm Chatter

Weekly

Wednesday 10.30am Singing Group
Thursday 9.30am Prayers
10.00-11.30am Pop-in Centre
2.00pm Prayers at Catherine's - all welcome

St Andrew's

Ladies Fellowship

At their last meeting the Ladies Fellowship had a thought provoking talk from Breda Collins (Coatham House) about the very worthwhile work they do for young homeless people aged 16-25 in the Redcar area. It certainly emphasized what a diverse way this charity has of caring, housing, educating and helping those young people to make a better future for themselves.

Funding is always difficult in today's economic climate but the charity works hard to find ways to continue their excellent work. Our donations of tinned goods etc. are used to provide these young people, whose benefits haven't been awarded yet, with food so that they can eat. A rather sobering thought!

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 14th March 1.30-3.00p.m. when Jimmy Anderson will be giving us a slide show of his recent cruise to Norway and Spitzbergen. All welcome.

Joan Swan

Coffee Morning

Coffee Morning to be held at 8 Towthorpe, Nunthorpe on Thursday 23rd March 10.00a.m. Bring and Buy Stall and raffle. Tickets £2.00. available from Sheila, Doreen or Joan. Proceeds in aid of church funds.

Annual General Meeting

Church Meeting

Sunday 5th March

After morning worship

Helen Kettlewell 1937 - 2016

Helen who died just before Christmas was an Elder at Linthorpe for many years. She was very involved with the Guide movement and ran the Brownies, involving them in Church activities whenever she could and always ready with a report as to what they were doing. For some time she was the Guide Commissioner for the area, and loved being involved with the movement.

She was very practical and was usually the first one in the kitchen if tea and coffee were needed and was always very willing to do whatever she could to help. She had two daughters, Judith and Linda and adored her grandchildren. She was in the Police service for many years and also worked as a lollipop lady in Linthorpe. Her husband Gordon died in 2011 after being unwell for a long time.

When she became an Elder, she could always be relied upon to bring practical suggestions to meetings, and worked tirelessly to make the church run smoothly. Helen was one of those people who never made a fuss, but got on quietly and did what was needed, never wanting to be in the limelight but always there when things needed to be done.

Shirley writes:-

Thank you all so much for your recent expressions of love, care, sympathy - everything I and the family needed at this time. John and I must have been held in considerable warmth and affection by the church family. Bless you all.

Women's World Day of Prayer

Women's World Day of Prayer is to be held at St. Mary's Church, Nunthorpe on Friday 3rd March 2.00p.m. Teas, coffees served after service.

All welcome.

Coffee for charity

22nd Jan	Leprosy Relief	£16.20
29th Jan	Daisy Chain	£20.00
5th Feb	Life Boat	£23.00

St Andrew's Calendar

Fri	3rd Mar	2.00pm	Woman's World Day of Prayer at St Mary's Church
Wed	15th Mar	7.00	Group Elders at Guisborough

Weekly/Monthly

Boys Brigade

Details available from ministers
and church elders

Preachers

	Marton 10.00am	Guisborough 9.30am	Redcar 11.00am
5-Mar	MartonWT	D Elliott	J Martin Communion
12-Mar	K&M Harris Parade	D Moore Communion	N Johnson
19-Mar	J Harper Communion	M Harris	K Harris
26-Mar	D Elliott	Guis Folk	Meditation
2-Apr	M Harris	K Harris Communion	N Johnson

Material for the April Magazine to church editors by Sunday 12th
March please

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