

# *Group News*



*\* March \* 2018 \* March\**

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

[www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk](http://www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk)



Dear friends,

As I prepare this month's magazine we are rapidly approaching Lent. In Marton and Nunthorpe our Churches Together organised a pancake party and a shared worship to start our Lenten journey. Whilst pancakes are a traditional start to Lent, it is just the start of a period of time which the church sets aside for meditation and reflection. The piece below comes from the internet but allows us to consider what Lent might mean to us as individuals.

Overleaf is a piece that reflects on the horrors of Srebrenica and the need for the people there to try and find closure. The genocide that occurred has now led to findings of guilt in the Court at the Hague. Many thousands of people went missing and the Revd Hood is part of a group in Scotland that are working to ensure that they will continue to be remembered.

As a minister, Rev Hood had the opportunity to lead her church and also meet and work with people from outside the usual church congregation. Using these contacts she has been able to contribute to a legacy that has outlived her year as moderator. As we travel on our own Lenten journeys, are we able to leave an enduring Christian footprint?

*Roger Wheeler*

## **What is Lent?**

A confirmation student asked on their worship note: "What is Lent?" It can be easy to think everybody knows what Lent is. But how would you answer the question: "What is Lent"?

From one perspective, Lent is a season of the Christian church. It's 40 days, not including Sundays. It's the season right before Easter. The scripture lessons used during worship in Lent remind us of the struggle and pains of Jesus' life. We recall the pain and suffering he endured as he made his way to the cross-the cross he died upon so that we could be forgiven from our sins.

But on a whole other level, Lent is something to be experienced. Lent is a time where we are encouraged to slow down, to be quiet, to do good deep soul work reflecting on life-the life of Jesus our Saviour, and our own.

It is the season where we are reminded that there are times in our life where we suffer, just like our Saviour did. Through the slowing, the quiet, the reflection of the soul, we live into the hope that the pains and uncertainty we endure in life. We somehow get through pain because we have the example of the suffering and pains of Jesus' life. He lived his trials, we will too. It's that simple. It's that complex. Lent is something you experience rather than explain.

Lent is a important part of our journey. It's reflective. It's sombre. But it makes the celebration of the resurrection on Easter all the more wonderful. Come, be away from the business of life, find quiet, let your soul reflect, and find hope in the experience of Lent.

## **Remembering Srebrenica**

During my year as Moderator of the Church of Scotland I received many invitations, and I made it policy to say "yes" to as much as I could. The SNP MP, Angus Robertson, invited me to go to Srebrenica, and I am ashamed to say that I knew very little about the genocide prior to my visit.

It was something that did not impinge on Scotland; it was "over there". I did background research prior to going, but it could not prepare me fully for what I was to witness. You touch evil no matter where you go in Srebrenica, evil is very present there. But you also touch the other side of humanity.

Meeting the Mothers of Srebrenica was extraordinarily moving. They stand out in my memory because they were so determined to tell their story. They are a thorn in the side of the authorities because they don't give up in their search for justice.

They are reliving their grief constantly, no matter how many times they explain what happened to their husbands, fathers, and sons. They cannot leave it behind because they are still seeking justice, still searching for remains.

The amazing work of the International Commission on Missing Persons which aims to identify the remains found in the mass graves will hopefully bring them some closure, but it is hard because so little of their loved ones are found. One mother told how she buried only the leg of one son, and the arm of another son. One body was found in over 11 different sites. It was also good to meet the Serbian forensic doctor who is trying to help with this work. You witness both sides of humanity there.

Whilst I was Moderator it was impossible for me to do much for Srebrenica, but I was fortunate enough to take out a second delegation to bear witness to the genocide. I was persuaded by them to continue the work by joining the Scottish Board of Remembering Srebrenica.

Srebrenica shows us that it takes very little for a community to destroy one another where there are differences. They lived together, they intermarried.

We always have to work at our unity and our common humanity, because if we focus on our differences then it is easy for evil to grow. We can't turn a blind eye to things like sectarian name calling. Our country is diverse. We should never take that for granted.

People look blankly at you when you discuss Srebrenica. They don't know Srebrenica was in an UN protected safe zone. They don't know the lengths the Serbians went to hide the bodies. It is only by constantly remembering, by constant memorial, that we can hope to learn the fullest lessons from this dark moment in our European history.

We have to make sure we do not mask our hatred under religion, and we all have to stand up against oppression and say, "Not in my faith name."

*The Most Revd Lorna Hood*  
*Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for 2013–14*  
*From: [www.srebrenica.org.uk](http://www.srebrenica.org.uk)*

## Vestry Prayers

As a lay preacher, I've been invited to lead worship in many churches across the region, and it is always a privilege and a joy to do so

In nearly every church, the vestry Elder leads a prayer in the vestry before worship begins. However, I am aware that many Elders find this daunting and are worried by it. So, I thought I'd try and reassure people with a few ideas as to what goes into a vestry prayer. It doesn't need to be long, and it doesn't need big words or long involved phrases. Here are a few bullet points, and maybe those who are called upon to be vestry Elder on any particular Sunday might find them useful.

- First, thank the Lord for the privilege of being able to come freely to worship Him.
- Ask for the Lord's blessing and His compassion on the congregation.
- Ask for the Lord's blessing and His presence alongside the worship leader.
- Thank Him that He always hears our prayers.

Please feel free to add your own thoughts to those above, and be reassured that I, for one, am always immensely grateful to everyone prepared to say a prayer with and for me before the service begins.

Blessings:

Jan



# *Synod Prayers*

- 4th March: Tearfund Sunday  
Trinity LEP (Methodist/URC), Bedlington; Elsdon Avenue LEP (Methodist/URC); Seaton Delaval; Blyth URC; Revd Greg Thompson
- 11th March: Mothering Sunday – for mothers everywhere;  
Synod Meeting at Wideopen on 17th;  
Our Synod Moderator, Revd Dave Herbert; Synod Clerk, Mrs Melanie Campbell; Synod Treasurer, Revd Tony Haws
- 18th March: St Cuthbert's Centre, Holy Island; its visitors and management team; Warden of the Centre, Revd Rachel Poolman
- 25th March: Our worship and activities during Holy Week and for our Easter Celebrations

## *Redcar*

### **Easter Coffee Morning**

**Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> March**

**10am until 12noon.**

Refreshments include tea and coffee together with Hot Cross Buns.

Donations please on the day for the cake stall and donations for the Tombola and an Easter Raffle would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

## Thank You

Dear Friends,

I would like to thank all my friends who wrote to me when my husband Arthur died, the comfort I found in reading them and knowing so many people were with me in prayer was amazing.

I had told the undertaker ‘there won’t be many at the funeral, we are a very small family – how wrong I was. The Church family and other friends surrounded us with love.

Thank you everyone,

With love and thanks,

Norma

## Strange Calendars

A hymn tells us that ‘The Day of Resurrection earth tells it out ....’

Yet our new calendar often makes Monday the first day of the week. This is correct for the ‘working week’ but Son Day is still the first day.

A few years ago my calendar had the same days each month for the full and new moons. Obviously wrong – a lunatic calendar perhaps.

Pill dispensers also make Monday the first day.

So why isn’t Sunday in its correct place?

We need to keep on singing that hymn.

*John Crowther*

## Redcar Calendar

### Weekly

Wednesday 10.30am Singing Group in the Church

Thursday 9.30am Prayers

10.00-11.30am Pop-in Centre

2.00pm Payers at the home of Catherine—all are welcome

# Guisborough

The URC has made a great stride forward in its use of IT by introducing ‘Daily Devotions’ on the Web, <https://devotions.urc.org.uk>. Since it began 15 months ago it has built up quite a following. The daily articles are available via email or on social media sites such as Facebook. Daily Devotions have attracted quite a following. On some days the commentary is bland, even dire, but on others it can be very thought provoking. Recently there have been a series on Micah and one of the issues raised is how much the church should be involved in political debate. Old Testament prophets certainly didn’t hold back from criticising the leaders of Judah. In our day the URC takes a stand on many important topical issues. Via the Joint Public Issues Team (in conjunction with the Methodists, Church of Scotland, and Baptists) it provides pointers on government consultations, party conference reports, and election issues. Some of us find it disappointing that at local level there seems to be little discussion or debate about any of the important political decisions which face us. There are always difficulties and dangers in applying our Christian beliefs and knowledge to current political events but by not doing this we seem to risk separating our faith from real life.

One of the big issues confronting us is the damage we continue to do to the environment. A particular example is huge damage to the ocean and marine life by virtually indestructible plastic waste. Teesside was, and still is, a major producer of plastic and a number of our members (myself included) have spent part of our working lives helping to manufacture chemicals and plastics. It’s easy to

	<b>Vestry</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Door</b>	<b>Flowers</b>
4th March	J Reynolds	R Tunnicliffe	M Burrows	P Etwell
11th March	J Basham		D Thompson	M Ward
18th March	D Beattie		B Ward	J Reynolds
25th March	M Burrows		D Beattie	Houstons
1st April	B Ward	P Etwell	J Basham	M Baird

## Guisborough Calendar

Tue 13th March 7.15pm Church meeting /AGM.  
Thu 29<sup>th</sup> March 7.00pm Maundy Thursday Service of  
Meditation in the Hall. All wel-  
come.

### 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

shift the blame to consumers away from the producers – producers are just supplying what the consumer wants – but that is a rather facile argument. The desire for individual comfort and prosperity has dominated society. Is it time to apologise and ask God for forgiveness?

Switching the subject completely, I have always been puzzled and even somewhat amused at the bible removal ritual at the end of our services. The delegated person picks up the bible and, having turned to face the congregation, takes it out the back into the hall. Some delegates, but not all, choose to bow very solemnly to the congregation before taking it away. The whole process seemed to me to indicate that the bible had had its airing and was now being put away safely for another week. That didn't seem right. I asked one of our preachers whether she could shed any light on the symbolism. Yes. It symbolises the church, having completed its own service, taking the word out into the wider world, followed by the congregation of believers. (I am still left wondering what the solemn bow signifies?)

*James Robertson*

# *St Andrew's*

**Coffee Morning**  
**Thursday 22nd March**  
**10.30am**

**at Eleanor's**  
2c Gypsy Lane, Nunthorpe.

Raffle, Bring and Buy Stall. Tickets  
£2.00 available from Eleanor,  
Sheila, Doreen or Joan Swan or just  
come along for a chat and a scone.

Proceeds in aid of church funds.

**Women's World**  
**Day of Prayer**

is to be held at

**Marton Methodist Church**  
The Grove, Marton

**Friday 2nd March**  
**2.00pm**

Refreshments will be served  
after service. All welcome.

Churches Together in Marton and Nunthorpe present:

## **Pentecost Songs of Praise**

**20th May 2018, 6.30pm**

**Music by the Lockwood Brass Band**

In the grounds of St Cuthbert's Marton (weather permitting)

## **Coffee for Charity**

14th Jan	Boys' Brigade	£21.00
21st Jan	Larchfield Centre	£14.44
28th Jan	Target Ovarian Cancer	£20.05
4th Feb	Leprosy Mission	£20.00

# *Preachers*

	<b>Marion</b> <b>10.00am</b>	<b>Guisborough</b> <b>10.00am</b>	<b>Redcar</b> <b>11.00am</b>
4-Mar	Jan Harper	Ken Harris	Jane Rowell Communion
11-Mar	Dave Elliott Parade	Margaret Harris	Ken Harris
18-Mar	Norma Johnson Communion	Donna Moore	Julie Martin
25-Mar	Margaret Harris	Norma Johnson	Jan Harper
1-Apr	Margaret Harris Communion	Jane Rowell Communion	Ken Harris Communion

Material for the February Magazine to church editors by Sunday  
11th March please

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