

Group News



** May * 2014 * May**

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

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Minister

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Dear Friends,

I begin my words to you all with these seasonally meaningful words written by the Presidents of Churches Together in England...

There are moments when life doesn't seem worth living anymore, when there is a sense of helplessness around us, when injustice piles on injustice and dreams are trampled underfoot. That was how the followers of Jesus felt on Good Friday. Jesus had been executed by the powers that be and the hopes of a kingdom full of justice, peace and love seemed buried with him. Many in our world experience such times of desolation as they endure war, insurrection, hunger, poverty and distress.

But early on Easter Sunday morning when the women came to anoint the body of Jesus, they found that something extraordinary and inexplicable had happened. The grave clothes were there, but the tomb was empty. They soon discovered that Jesus was alive. God had raised him from the dead and the power of death had been broken.

The earliest Christians gathered together, encountered the Risen Jesus among them, and experienced his forgiveness. On Good Friday Jesus was lifted up on the cross, his resurrection on Easter is the assurance that God in Christ is with us, giving us hope and strength to grasp the opportunities available, to proclaim his resurrection and to seek his help in times of difficulty and struggle. With Christ in our midst we will overcome.

The good news of Easter is that God's kingdom of love, justice and peace is possible and that lives of individuals and peoples can be transformed. We pray that this Easter will be a time when the risen Jesus comes into your lives and that you feel a calling to be his witnesses that the world may see and believe.'

Now firstly I love that these Easter words which, written from an ecumenical perspective, are words that we all agree with, that we

would all want to stand alongside, as we celebrate our personal transformation resulting from the Good News. And secondly, I love the sense that this all bodes well for the Church with a capital ‘C’ in our country, a Church who is still able to come together and celebrate what is at the core of our faith at Easter time! But thirdly I want to take this opportunity to remind you of some of the other exciting things that have put our faith to the forefront in our nation over this last couple of weeks, that lead me to have hope in the transformation of our communities and our nation.

For example, did anyone see the Great North Passion Play held in South Shields and broadcast live on BBC 1 on Good Friday?! The fact that the BBC still finds themselves able to commit to that level of investment in broadcasting the Christian faith story gives me real hope! And what about our faith story in the Cinemas?! Did you know that a film which advocates our belief in God is currently showing in our cinemas? ‘God’s not dead’ has been showing locally in Teesside Park over Easter, telling the story of a young man in college in America who stands up against his philosophy professor at college who claims God is dead. Wow! Really?! And what about recent ideas to introduce guidelines about the Christian faith for employers? With many not knowing now about our faith, this education of employers could have a knock on effect, with policy makers doing the work of sharing our faith for us! What good news this is! And so let us pray for more of this transformational activity within our country and communities, and that we might know what we should be doing to share the faith and the fresh inspiration we have from God this Easter!

God bless!

Revd Catey Morrison

Modern

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

C. S. Lewis (mid 20th Century).

Dot McSherry - Group Secretary

Hello - I am now into my fourth month as Group Secretary and just about getting to grips with most things. I now have a mobile phone that can be used to contact me if anything needs attention immediately. If I do not answer immediately please leave a message and I will return your call.

I will also take messages for Catey if for any reason you cannot reach her and you do not want to leave a message on her answer phone.

Mobile - **07949723013** ~ Telephone **01642 491172**.

E-Mail - mcsberryandrew@googlemail.com

Fun And Faith Club

The FAF club will be meeting next on Sunday 18th May at 5.30pm for the last of the sabbatical presentations looking at the good news of Jesus. Fun and games at the manse will follow on from this! (Please contact Catey for further information or for a lift!)

Manse Prayers

Manse prayers will no longer be happening at Ken Harris's house on Tuesday mornings at 8.45am. This has come as a result of care-ful thought and prayer for Ken and is with immediate effect.

'A Strange Way to Use the Bible References'

Few of us will have missed the media reminding us that 2014 is the centenary of the outbreak of World War I. To remember such a sad and serious time when so many of the armed forces died, as well as innocent civilians, can be difficult.

The drift towards war started many years before the event. Some diplomatic crises passed without violence, but then came the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. His death, in far off and little known Serbia, was the fuse which finally fired the powder keg.

The business world is using the centenary to make television programmes, films, books and even model kits to publicise it. So churches must be careful to get the balance right, for the gap between a sensitive remembrance and a more entertaining one is narrow. For instance, the catchy music for the songs of that long ago conflict is still remembrance, especially in an age where many research their family trees or are interested in local or European history. The songs played on a mouth organ or just sung, comforted men on the front and also their families back home. Their titles tell us this. "Keep the home fires burning", "Pack up your troubles", "It's a long way to Tipperary", and "Goodbye Dolly Grey" are examples. If this year they are performed to make money for the Red Cross, Remembrance Day and other charities which help those who have suffered in more recent wars that is all to the good.

So back to my title. One hundred years ago a greater percentage of people attended church and were more familiar with the Bible. For example, within the British Navy men used their bible knowledge to send biblical references by flag signals when they wished to criti-

cise their officers. I give three examples of this, the last one heard in a sermon on the subject of John the Baptist.

1. When a ship was slow to answer a flag signal, Proverbs 6 v 9 was used. "How long wilt thou sleep O sluggard; when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?". It was answered with Habakkuk 3 v 2. "O Lord, I have heard thy speech - in wrath remember mercy."

2. A ship which through carelessness released a cloud of funnel smoke received the message from Song of Songs 3 v 6. "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke?" They replied with Psalm 74 v 1. "O God, why hast thou cast us off forever? Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?"

3. And finally, this one was used between the wars at a Spithead Naval Review. A guest ship was the German battle ship 'Graf Spee'. The reference was addressed to a ship which was late and had to be last in the procession of ships. The message was Matthew 11 v 3, "Are you the one who is to come or do we, disciples of Jesus, look for another?"

*Article from John Crowther
(slightly edited by Catey)*

Synod Prayers

Synod Prayers for week beginning:

4th May - All who play a part in leading worship; Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner Mrs Jan Harper

11th May - Christian Aid Week – Vocations – Christian Aid North East; Regional Manager Mrs Judith Sadler; Those exploring vocations, student ministers, Training for Learning & Serving students; Synod TLS Coordinator Mrs Chris Eddowes

18th May - Grindon; Roker; St Bede; Stockton Road, Sunderland; Boldon; Revd Dr David Whiting

25th May - Ascension this week – PCM: The churches of the Limpopo presbyteries in and around Gaza Province – together with Maputo the heartland of the Church; Northern Baptist Regional Minister Revd John Claydon

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).

Prayer Pointers for May

4th May - Pray for all those accessing the Foodbanks in our communities at this time, praying for all those who are most in need and vulnerable in our communities this week.

11th May - Pray for the work of Christian Aid right around the world and for the street collections and other fundraising activities happening over this coming week as part of Christian Aid Week. Pray that this highlighting of the work of Christian Aid might stir people's hearts to respond.

18th May - Pray for those we know who are struggling with ill health, particularly remembering relatives who live far away from us. Pray for those within our churches who are struggling to juggle time and commitments to allow them to be there for their families.

25th May - As we celebrate Ascension Day this week, the day that Jesus rose to heaven to be reunited with his Father at the completion of his earthly work, we pray that we might not just look to heaven to know Jesus, but know the Father and the Son through the activity of the Holy Spirit who came to earth in Jesus' place, and seek to carry on Jesus' work through the empowering of the Spirit.

News from the Persecuted Church

Give thanks to the Lord for a training programme run by a Barnabus partner in Uganda that enables Christian converts from Islam to become self-sufficient. Many new believers are thrown out of their homes and disowned by their families and communities, and find themselves with no means of support. The project provides training in tailoring, hairdressing, weaving and farming, along with equipment and other resources for them to put their new skills to work. The converts are also given discipleship training to help them become mature believers who can share their faith with others. Pray that the programme will continue to transform the lives of vulnerable converts and cause the Gospel to bear more fruit (Colossians 1:6).

Barnabus Fund Prayer Diary www.barnabusfund.org

Pray for justice for the hundreds of Muslims and Christians in Pakistan charged falsely with blasphemy.

Pray for four Christians in Iran who were sentenced last year to 80 lashes for taking Communion.

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

Blowing Your Cover: Planning

As I explained last month the Blowing Your Cover course will be commencing in our church services from June onwards on a once a month basis to help us all find new ways of sharing our faith in our everyday lives and as churches to help us with our outreach. It is hoped that the six sessions we will gain some important tools for being more open in our faith. There is a planning meeting for the course on 8th May at 7.30pm at 153, High Street, Marske. Anyone who would like to help plan and/or present the resources in your church is welcome to come along to the meeting. Please speak to Catey, Donna Moore or Ray Tunnicliffe for more information. We would like to have at least one person from each church at the planning meeting if possible.

Blowing Your Cover: The Course

In 2011 the East Cleveland Group held a whole day exploring the challenges of evangelism and presented by Paul Stokes a prominent member of the URC “Group for Evangelism and Renewal,” (GEAR) Following on from this I asked Paul for advice on a practical way forward and he recommended the ‘*Blowing Your Cover*’ course. Since then we have experienced further evangelical ideas from the Rev. John Paul, of West Denton URC, in his talk entitled ‘Evangelism as Church Fellowships.’ Blowing Your Cover’ will help to take us one stage further on the way to making evangelism a natural and essential part of the life of our churches.

The course is a training scheme for evangelism designed to equip and release people to confidently share their faith among family, friends and other people. The format consists of a series of six training sessions aimed at inspiring and encouraging individuals and churches. However, in order to engage with as many people as possible it is to be presented once a month as part of worship. This will mean that the teaching material will be adapted to take the

form of a dialogue between the presenters and the congregation – so that the essential issues of taking faith into the community can be discussed with freedom and honesty.

Beginning in June these presentations will be on Sundays in June, July, September, October, November and completing in January, 2015. Each presentation will take approximately half an hour sandwiched between worship before and after.

In order to deliver this programme a small team of leaders, drawn from all of the churches in the Group, will need to be trained to present it in the various churches throughout the period of this process. Please now take the opportunity to pray for guidance for those people who decide to take on such a role.

- A summary of the course is as follows:
- Taking the mystery out of evangelism
- Equipping the church to effectively share their faith with those around them
- Helping people to find ways to express their faith to others
- Enabling the church to work evangelistically as a team, rather than individuals

The six sessions consist of:

1. *Communicating the Gospel*: To understand the importance of the Gospel and be able to communicate this to others; to be able to discern when a person is ready to be a Christian – and to offer help and guidance in that process.
2. *Your Sphere of influence*: To recognise your own style of evangelism – that is talking about faith with others – and how that can be communicated to *people* within your sphere of influence. In addition, it is important to be able to recognise the evangelistic styles of others in your fellowship.
3. *Connecting with Your Culture*: To gain an understanding of our culture and how this influences the way in which people respond to call of faith – and to *examine* culture connecting qualities.
4. *The Impact of Your Life*: To understand how your life influ-

- ences others and to write down your personal story of faith
5. *A Spirit Filled Life Style*: To understand the role that the Holy Spirit plays in *evangelism* and look at the signs of this in your life – and then to pray for your friends.
 6. *Blowing Your Cover*: To begin to put into practice what you have learnt so far and to enjoy spending time with your friends in Christ. To *overcome* any concerns you may have and blow your cover as a Christian.

The above summary of the work shows that the course covers a wide area of different ideas, concepts and practical objectives. In this course a very important question is asked: “*Do you believe what you believe?*” The answer must surely be *yes*. In that case this is a challenge we can all face with confidence and in the knowledge of the guidance and support of Our Lord, Jesus. And so then it follows, more importantly, we can tell others about him, his saving grace and how lives can be enhanced by his presence.

Ray Tunnicliffe, Guisborough

Guisborough

Eastertide Greetings,

Ash Wednesday is now part of our memories, but of course it is the beginning of a journey that all Christians are asked to make at Lent, and the end of the journey is Easter Sunday.

This year’s journey for myself has been totally different, because of course in previous years the journey had been taken together with Dorothy.

This year I have again chosen a book to be my guide and support and I have been reading ‘Not by bread alone’ by Bishop Robert F. Morneau. Each day there are scripture readings and reflections on those readings, a meditation which is a very personal one, on the

Guisborough Calendar

Tue 20th May 2.30pm Belmont Care Home service

Weekly

Thursdays 9.30am – 11.30am Market Day Coffee Morning

Thursdays 11.30am Quiet Time – prayers and reflections with Catey, Ken, Norma and others.

scripture and the reflection, which then closes by a prayer. Each day for me, I have seen again the relationship that Jesus has with the Creator God, learned new things about his relationships and teaching with the disciples and the challenge he presented to the people who came to listen. How life can be changed by the relationship that Jesus formed with the people who came to see him with so many different problems. A learning lesson for the whole of Christianity about service to the world itself, to all humankind, and of course to the Creator God.

One of the things I have been challenged by over the years in Guisborough is the work with residents and staff at Belmont residential care home. Having gone in weekly for a long period, I have sought to build up relationships with people who suffer from dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other medical problems. This is a challenge of how one communicates on an individual level and in the context of the worship we offer month by month. Having sought training, help and advice from many sources on this, the whole experience of my journey through Lent has raised, for me, personally and the church collectively, of how well we seek to communicate in a world where there are many different ways of communication, but for myself, I have learned in an ever changing world, it is important the message of God's love is given. Care for all people of all ages is where the world is at the present time. Can that voice be heard?

An addition to my journey this year has been a time of sharing – sharing in the journey with people who worship at St Nicholas’ church in Guisborough. Joining in the service on Ash Wednesday, followed by an experience which I had valued in the past, but this year also meant sharing in Compline on Monday evenings throughout Lent.

This has been a time of contemplation: reflection: meditation. These for me are important in all our lives, for every day of human life, to remember from whom we have received the gift of life. Lent, for me, has become a time when I have asked myself again many questions about the way I have lived my life, in relationship to the giver of that life, and my relationship with the creator God. At the same time also being challenged and presented with an opportunity to look at how and in what ways I may serve God in my life’s journey yet to be.

Challenged hopefully in the worship I shall share with others on Easter Sunday, I shall be realising again the cost. Firstly, the creator God himself, who forms again and offers again a covenant relationship, no longer for one nation, but for all the nations of the world, and all human beings who inhabit the world in which we live. The challenge I believe, is crucial to the three major Abrahamic religions and also to other faiths in this 21st century. To secure a future for the world in which we live and in the relationships we make and the sorts of lifestyles we all lead.

Not by bread alone. Bishop Robert F. Morneau. Liturgical Press, Minnesota. 2013

Ken Harris

	Vestry	Communion	Door	Flowers
4th May	J Reynolds	D Beattie	D Houston	K Harris
11th May	R Tunnicliffe		B Ward	M Baird
18th May	D Moore		M Houston	D Beattie
27th May	J Basham		D Cross	C Collins
1st June	J Reynolds	B Ward	P Etwell	J Reynolds

Lingdale

Book Club

The next meeting will be on 6th May at 7pm when we will be discussing The Rosie Project by Graeme Simsion. New members welcome. Books are provided.

Community Café

10.30 – 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.

Flower Rota

4th May Miss S Griffiths
11th May Mrs J Coulthard
18th May Mr B Dove
25th May Mrs M Saunders
1st June In memory of Miss J
Scarth and Mrs B Waller

Lingdale Calendar

Wed 7th May 1.30 - 3.30pm Craft & Conversation
Wed 21st May 1.30 - 3.30pm Craft & Conversation

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

Ancient

Christ has turned all our sunsets into dawn

Clement of Alexandria, theologian (3rd Century)

Redcar

Spring Coffee Morning

A huge thank you to all who helped and supported our Spring Coffee morning on 22nd March – it was a lovely morning which raised £240 for Church Funds.

Vintage Afternoon Tea

Saturday, 7th June

2pm until 4pm

Further details to follow!



War tears lives apart.
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them back together.

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Redcar Calendar

Tue 6th May 2.00pm Craft and Chatter in the Church all are welcome.

Tue 20th May 2.00pm Welcome at Wins at the home of Win Cordiner.

Weekly

Wednesday 11.00am Singing Group in the Church

Thursday 9.30am Prayers

10.00-11.30am Pop-in Centre

Thursday 2.00pm Thursday People – at the home of Catherine Milburn for Bible Study.

St Andrew's

Ladies Fellowship

Several members went to the Civic Theatre on the 7th April to see the musical "Grease" and had a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Thank you Sheila for organising the trip.

Our next outing, no date arranged yet, will be our spring lunch.

Quiz, Pie and Pea Supper Saturday 24th May ~ 7.00pm for 7.30pm.

Tickets £6.00 available from Sheila, Doreen and Joan S. There will also be a raffle. Proceeds in aid of church funds.

Coffee for Charity

23 March	RNLI	£14.20
30 March	Larchfield	£12.50
6 April	Leprosy Mission	£16.3
13 April	Boys' Brigade	£18.50

Charity Walk Christian Aid Car Wash

Grant and Steven are once again walking for Christian Aid on Saturday 10th May. A sponsor form is on the church notice board and anyone wishing to sponsor these two energetic walkers please add their name to the form. Thank you.

**Saturday
10th May**

**With
Boy's Brigade**

St Andrew's Calendar

Weekly

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

Preachers

	4-May	11-May	18-May	25-May
Marton	10.00am K Harris	C Morrison Parade	M Johnson Communion	J Harper
Guisbo	9.30am C Morrison Communion	M Johnson	C Morrison Sabat Pre	K Harris
Redcar	11.00am C Morrison United ZP 10.45am	J Harper	C Morrison Sabat Pre	N Johnson
Lingdale	5.30pm J Coulthard	C Morrison Communion	C Morrison plus FAF	N Johnson

Material for the June Magazine to church editors by Sunday 11th May please

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