

Group News



** November 2012 **

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

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Minister

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Dear Friends,

It is very difficult to summarise my feelings right now. As I sit down to write this, I have just attended a wonderful Synod Day of celebrations for the 40th Birthday of the United Reformed Church. As part of the day I attended a singing workshop led by Alison Adam of the Iona Community, and also a beautifully led Godly Play workshop which exonerated the power of really good storytelling. The worship and the meal at the end of the day were marvelous too, with the right blend of informality and tradition. There was a talk given by David Cornick which was both informative and inspirational. And all this was mixed together with coffee times and other times to just mix together and feel part of the United Reformed Church family. So all in all I feel refreshed by a really positive day to which I wish more of you have been able to come along to! But maybe after the next 40 years?!

And there have been other really great times recently to give thanks to God for, and to see the positive in. Let's not forget the wonderful Evangelism Training morning that was led by Revd. John Paul at the end of September! Please do not think that you are going to be getting away with not learning from that day, for even if you weren't there, you *are* going to be hearing lots of advice and suggestions from that morning, due to excellent quality of the sessions. I was personally challenged to hear that John prays for every single member of his church each week in depth, a task which takes him 7 hours a week. And I think we would all be challenged to realise that evangelism is not just being nice to people when they do come along to one of our events, but also following up on new people to the church, visiting them at home in response to their coming along, and supporting them in their need/befriending them in the days and weeks after their first engagement with the church. i.e. showing people that they really do matter to God and to us in our church! So another really positive event in the life of our churches!

And again there is even more happening! Two elders training eve-

nings have kept our elders busy and upbeat, and also held last month was a really positive Group Elders meeting which allowed all the elders to meet together to begin to plan how the Group will be run with only one minister around to work in leadership with the elders across the Group. The next Group Elders, to be held at the end of November, will continue on this good start.

But this is where we get to the difficult bit. All this positivity, yet as I sit here at my computer this evening having enjoyed a thoroughly special day at Synod, I am faced with the reality that within 4 days, Meg will have left the Group for good, in order to start afresh in her new pastorate in Newcastle. And then my heart wants to drop. I can't imagine that the removal lorry will really have already taken Meg away to her new life by the time you read this. But then again, I think we need to take heart from what Meg herself said to us all at the Group Service which was her final service for many in the Group, and that was she had done all she could here, she had run out of challenge, and now she needed to go challenge anew others. Meg has clearly chosen to follow what God wants her to do, and that leaves us all here to likewise follow what God wants us to do. And yes, we may not like the reality of only one minister, but that doesn't mean that it all has to be a bad thing, if we accept that God can still work through our situation, in our churches just like God has before! Now is the time for looking for the new things that God wants to do with us, the surprising twists in our journeys of faith as churches and as individuals. If God had something new in store for Meg, then why not assume that God has something new in store for us too!

So let us celebrate and give thanks to God for all that Meg gave to our pastorate, and let's look for the new beginnings, for the new ways in which God is going to help us all to give something to our Group of churches. For we all have a part to play – don't we?

God bless!

Rev Catey Morrison

A Big Thank You

What a generous bunch of people you, from the East Cleveland Group, are! As a result of your giving I have been delighted to pass on to our Group Treasurer a goodly sum for the Xai Xai fund. It was a joy to celebrate my 60th birthday with so many of you and your giving on that occasion resulted in £227. On the Sunday, when we celebrated 40 years of the U.R.C. donations amounted to £143 and since then there have been donations of £60 which bring the grand total to £430. This money will be used to benefit Rosa, her family and her church in Xai Xai.

And I offer a huge thank you for the picture of Roseberry Topping received from you after our Group Service when so many of you were there to say farewell. It has been such a delight to drive past this wonderful landmark on countless occasions during my time here. I have even climbed it a few times. I have often thought I should have a picture of this unique hill and the one I now have is a delight to behold. Thank you! And, thank you, too, for the very generous cheque which I am sure can be put to very good use.

And may God bless you all!

Meg

Synod Prayers

This month please pray for Tees & Swale

4 November

Northgate, Darlington and Springfield Centre; Zion, Northallerton

11 November

Barnard Castle; Keld; Low Row; Rev Julie Martin

18 November

The Keld Resource Centre: its users and its management team;
Synod Inter-Faith Relations Advisor,
Rev Dr David Whiting

25 November

The Churches' Regional Commission in the North East; Rt Rev
Martin Wharton, Bishop of Newcastle;
Rev Ruth Gee, Chair of Darlington Methodist District

Manse Prayers

Group Elders

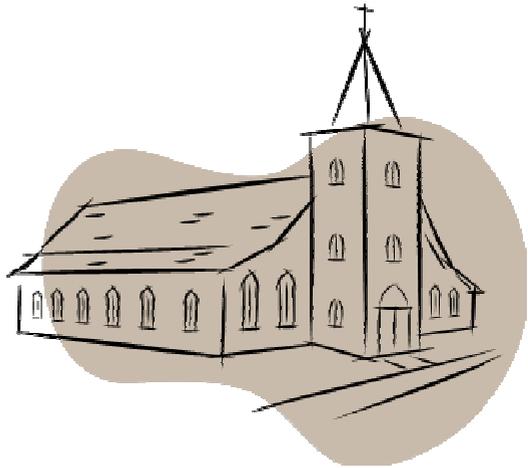
Will continue to be held every Tuesday at 8.30-9.30am at Ken Harris' Home (31, Oakley Close, Guisborough) – all welcome to come pray and read the bible together! Group elders will next meet Thursday 29th November, 7.30pm at Guisborough URC

Mission Partnership Advent Prayer Morning
Saturday 1st December 9.30am-1pm
Friends Meeting House in Middlesbrough

Open to all to come and find space and stillness as we enter Advent and approach Christmas.

Pilgrimage to Iona 2013

Rev Catey and Catherine Milburn are organising a trip for a small group of people (maximum a dozen) to go to Iona from Friday 30th August to Friday 6th September next year. We will be staying in the Abbey itself which is a very special experience, although you do need to be able to manage 1 flight of stairs to stay there. You will be able to attend the daily times of worship, as well as enjoy the peace and beauty of the island and the afternoon activities put on by the Abbey staff. In addition it will be possible to go on a boat trip to Staffa Island (the other end of the Giant's Causeway) which is home to many kinds of sea birds. However you need to expect to join in the community's life by doing some simple morning chores, and also expect to be sharing compact bedrooms with 1-3 other people. The cost is £332 per person, or the subsidised rate of £161 if you are on a low income (i.e. basic state pension with no top up; unemployed) and you feel you cannot otherwise go. Catey needs to know within the next three weeks if you would definitely like to go.



Modern

The atheist who is moved by love is moved by the Spirit of God; an atheist who lives by love is saved by his faith in the God whose existence he denies.

William Temple late Archbishop of Canterbury early 20th century

News from the Persecuted Church

A grandmother from a mainly Christian ethnic group was gang-raped and tortured by Burmese soldiers when they invaded her village on 1st May. The 48-year-old Kachin woman had taken refuge in a church building in Luk Pu village after most of the other villagers had fled. Around ten soldiers beat her with rifle butts, stabbed her with knives, stripped and sexually assaulted her over three days. After they left, she was found semiconscious by some villagers and taken to hospital. She has since been reunited with her family but is deeply traumatised and mentally disturbed. Pray for her healing of her physical and psychological wounds, and that Christians in Kachin state will be delivered from the ravages of the Burmese army.

(From the Barnabus Fund Prayer diary)

Pray for the Indonesian Alex Aan, the atheist who was imprisoned after declaring his atheism on Facebook. He was sentenced to two and a half years in jail in June.

(From the Christian Solidarity Worldwide Prayer diary)

FAF (Fun and Faith) Club News

FAF Club meets for our younger church members once a month at the Lingdale Manse normally from 6.30-8.30pm.

The next meeting is on Sunday 18th November at the earlier time of 4.30pm, for a Christmas Nativity Service planning meeting/rehearsal and, all being well, a trip to Mini-Monsters near Whitby to play Lasertag! Extra adults can come supervise as long as they fully join in!

Also, a sleepover is being planned for December 8th-9th, hopefully at St. Andrew's Marton & Nunthorpe, from 6pm Saturday to 11.30am Sunday, where it is intended that the FAF Club will help lead worship.

Group News Request

Catey is interested in hearing from anyone who would be interested in taking a turn once a year or so to do a covering letter for the Group News Magazine. There is no test which you need to pass to be able to be eligible to write one, just a willingness to share a little of your faith and the wisdom you have gained over the years with others in the Group. Covering letters are normally about two-thirds of the page in typed text (size 12) and the subject matter of your letter would be left to you, although at certain times of year there would be some expectation that seasonal topics be covered to some degree. If you are interested in taking a turn now or then to allow Catey to write the covering letters on a bi-monthly basis, please speak to Catey (01287 651926).

Guisborough

It doesn't seem like nine years since I, along with others, gave the right hand of fellowship to Meg at her induction on a very warm day in May. But much has happened during the intervening years. The church nationally went through a period of reorganisation with the introduction of Mission Partnerships to replace Districts within the Synod. This was followed by the call for all churches to 'Catch the Vision' of a new faith for the 21st century through the three years of the Vision 4Life campaign.

And now we have set ourselves the target of a better future in today's society through Vision 2020.

Through all of this Meg has guided us faithfully and well, as we dealt with all the difficulties and challenges along the way. In her first sermon, addressed to the Guisborough Church, Meg asked the question: how do we 'know' God? So right at the start of her ministry we were confronted with the central issue of our faith in Christ. On that day

the children were easily able to offer a number of answers when asked what God was like – but are we, of much greater experience, so confident?

It was so good for the all of the churches in the East Cleveland Group to gather together, in St Andrew's, Marton, to celebrate the 40th, Anniversary of the formation of the United Reformed Church, by the coming together of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in England. How appropriate it was that this most important occasion gave us such a fine opportunity to say goodbye and thank you to Meg for being our minister for the best part of a decade.

Together in this service, as we reminded ourselves of the founding principles of our church, it was good to go through and affirm the statement of the nature, faith and order of the U.R.C. It was also a happy time as each church made their contribution to worship: the singing group from Redcar; looking back to the early church reformers; looking forward with the young people showing us how things change over time;

and the breaking of the paper chain to symbolise freedom based on our statement of faith in Christ. And then at the end Meg reminded us of that aim of the new church, namely that in dying we have life. The United Reformed Church was born to join with others in unity and so to die. Of course the real end of the service came when Meg was given a presentation: a picture of Roseberry Topping – a focal point of beauty she has often spoken about over the years of her ministry.

In September we were given the chance to learn about tried and tested methods of encouraging people to learn about Christianity and discover the joys of faith and fellowship – or in other words: evangelism. The half day session was led by John Paul, a URC minister from Newcastle. Many ideas, practical things to do and useful observations were made. Out of all of this came, for me, two points of importance: the quality of our church community and how, it is through good relationships of trust with non Christians that we can have the greatest hope of bringing someone to Christ.

So in our fellowships would an outsider find a real sense of the presence of God and how can we express our faith effectively to the people we meet during the course of every day life? Now is the time to reflect on all that we have learnt and, together with others, see the way forward to practical ways for telling others of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Also, in September we supported, for a second year, the national campaign of Back to Church Sunday. This encourages church members to invite a friend or acquaintance to come to church – the simplest form of evangelism. On this occasion we combined the event with the Harvest Festival. In addition, the church was opened for the public on the Saturday prior to the

service. This offered an opportunity for us to invite other people to join us on this occasion. On the day a number of visitors appeared so we had a larger congregation than normal. Catey spoke on the theme of ‘sharing’ – using as an example, the work done by the Guisborough Bridge Association with the ‘Food-stop’ project – which gives emergency food supplies to vulnerable people in the local community. It was good that our harvest gifts were given to help.

Last month I was invited, by John Moore President of the Teesside Battalion of the Boys’ Brigade, to attend a Founders Day Parade. It was held in the Baptist Tabernacle Church, Stockton, a modern octagonal building near the riverside with seating for the congregation ar-

Guisborough Calendar

Thu 29th Nov 7.30pm Group Elders meeting at Guisborough

Weekly

Thursdays 10.00am – 11.45am Market Day Coffee Morning

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

ranged in the style of a mini amphitheatre. In the past I was a member of the BB, serving as a boy in the 1st Teesside Company, based in St Andrew's and St George's URC, Stockton, and going on to be captain of the company – before retiring from the organisation in 1992. It was a real blast from the past for me and so when we sang the hymn: “Will your anchor hold in the storms of life” a lump came into my throat and I struggled to sing. John Moore gave the traditional BB reading from Hebrews 6: – including the motto “Sure and Steadfast.” Being hosts to boys the pastor did his sermon based on a round of golf - whacking an indoor golf ball into the congregation to emphasise each of his five points. Fortunately, he wisely decide not to do a full round of eighteen holes. For me it was a most memorable occasion, and I was able to

speak to former BB colleagues after the service, some of whom I had not seen for more than twenty years.

On a personal note I would like to thank all people who have shown concern and offered prayers for my daughter Helen,

Christmas Concert

Guisborough Choral Society will return to the traditional format for their Christmas Concert this year - arrangements of ancient and modern carols sung by the choir, lively contributions as usual from Lockwood Brass, seasonal readings, traditional carols for everyone to sing together and mince pies for all in the interval. The concert will be held in Guisborough Methodist Church, Westgate, 7.30pm on Saturday, 8th December.

Tickets at £10, £8 (concessions) and £1 (under 19) will be available as always from Guisborough Bookshop and Greensleeves music shop (both in Chaloner St.); wegottickets.com, members of the choir and at the door.

Guisborough Rotas

| | Vestry | Communion Door | | Flowers |
|----------|---------------|-----------------------|------------|----------------|
| Nov 4th | M Burrows | J Basham | D Beattie | D Cross |
| Nov 11th | D Houston | | M Houston | M Robson |
| Nov 18th | P Etwell | | J Bulmer | V Beattie |
| Nov 25th | D Moore | | J Reynolds | J Reynolds |
| Dec 2nd | D Beattie | P Etwell | D Cross | J Bulmer |

who has now been in hospital at Whickham. Here she hopes to make further progress in getting for a year after suffering a serious neurological injury. Having better in order to be able to live spent time in the Royal Victoria an independent life. Helen, Infirmary, Newcastle and the Norma, my son Philip and I Walkergate Neurological Hospital she is now resident in Chase for us. Park rehabilitation Centre at

Ray Tunnicliffe

Redcar

Welcome at Win's

Coffee and Conversation on a topical or biblical subject, 1.30-3.30pm 3rd Tuesday in the month – knitting welcome! (this month November 20th)

Thursday Morning at Church

9.30am Morning Prayers, every Thursday, followed by the Pop-In, for tea, coffee and light refreshments as well as a good chat with friends. Come along and be a friend of ours – 10-11.30am.

Thank You

Thank you to all who supported Catherine Milburn who organised an extremely worthwhile coffee morning on Saturday, 13th October for the Teesside Hospice. Over £420 was raised!

The young people enjoyed a sponsored bike ride from Lingdale – the amount raised from this has still to be added to the total.

Not quite Modern

Too many Christians envy the sinners their pleasures and the saint their joy, because they don't have either one.

Martin Luther early 1500s

Countdown to Christmas

On Saturday 10th November

11am until 3pm

Nativity sets from around the World on view.

Craft stalls including Cass Photography, Val Granger and more.

Cake stall, Raffle, Name the Dog and Everyone wins.

Good Christmas grub including soup and bacon butties!

Redcar Prayer Pointers

Week beginning...

5th November – For all the hard work that has gone into the Christmas Event this coming Saturday, and pray that this event will really reach people in the community through God’s stirring.

12th November – We give thanks to God for the Christmas event, and continue to pray for all who came through our doors last Saturday. May we be ready to follow up on those who came who were new, and to keep on praying for them.

19th November – For all the church members, and all those who are associated with our fellowship.

26th November – We pray for the Tesco Foodbank collection to be taking place this Saturday in Redcar; for members of the public to want to support the Foodbank by buying an item for Foodbank as they do their shopping. We pray that the Foodbank may get going quickly to support all those in our town who are in desperate need.

Timeout

9.30-11.30am

Every Wednesday

A safe space for mums to chat and for their children to play, with additional pampering and craft sessions. Cost £1 per adult.

Joint Service

Please note our Sunday service on the **2nd December** will take place at Newcomen Methodist Church (not Zetland Park Methodist this time) at 10.45am.

Redcar Calendar

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---|
| Tue 6 th Nov | 2 - 4pm | Craft and Chatter (please note the new time!) |
| Wed 7 th Nov | 1.30pm | Elders meeting |
| | 7.00pm | 'Sticky Faith' Scripture Union evening for youth and children's workers who want to know how to get young people to stick with their faith! Redcar Baptist Church, Park Ave. Cost £6. |
| Sat 10 th Nov | 11 - 3pm | Countdown to Christmas event |
| Mon 12 th Nov | 7.00pm | Redcar Foodbank meeting for all at Redcar Baptist Church to learn more about current developments. |
| Tue 20 th Nov | 2.00pm | Welcome at Win's at 46 Redcar Lane |
| Thu 29 th Nov | 7.30pm | Group Elders meeting at Guisborough |

Weekly

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|--|
| Wednesday | 9.30-11.30am | Timeout |
| | 11.00am | Singing Group - for all who just like to sing. |
| Thursday | 9.30am | Prayers |
| | 10.00-11.30am | Pop-in Centre |

The Darkest can change into the Brightest

The Celestial Ocean – The Transit of Venus Wednesday 6th June – a red letter day for astronomers across much of the globe and which coincidentally falls in the same week that the Queen, Country and Commonwealth celebrates the Diamond Jubilee.

The historic event set to excite astronomers; a Transit of Venus, is visible at sunrise (4:30am), the last to be witnessed in our lifetimes, the next not occurring until the year 2117 (not to be visible from the UK).

The 2004 Transit of Venus, the first since 1882, was well-placed for UK and European observers and was witnessed by millions one way or another.

In Cleveland we were unlucky for we didn't see the final stage of the transit of Venus in the early morning of June 6th because of thick cloud.

Earlier in the year Venus had been the brightest object in the evening sky except for the moon, but as it drew nearer to the sun it became lost in its glare.

Apparently from a site well away from town lights or industry it is just capable of casting a shadow, perhaps of an upright nail sticking up and placed in front of a piece of white card.

The black disc about a thirtieth of the diameter of the sun will not be seen crossing the sun again for over a century.

It is now a moving star – again very bright. And as Christmas approaches sometimes said to be the Star of Bethlehem.

If there is a message here it must be one of humility. The most Christ-like person is just a dark image when compared with the glory of God.

But we should never stop trying to follow Jesus in our lives.

John Crowther

Lingdale

Harvest

Thank you to everyone who attended the Harvest Supper and Quiz and donated items for the food bank collection.

Lingdale Book Club 7pm-8pm 1st Tuesday every month.

Books of all types tried, for all book lovers and those interested in giving reading a go. Come and have a cuppa and a chat about the latest book.

Shoe Boxes

If you would like a leaflet please let me know. Please make sure all boxes are handed to me by 16th November as I will be taking them to the drop off on the 17th. Susan

Flower Rota

4th November – Mr A Thompson
11th November – Mrs M Saunders
18th November – Mr T Waller
in memory of Miss J Scarth & Mrs B Waller
25th November – Mr T Waller
2nd December – Mrs J Scott

Lingdale Calendar

Tue 6th Nov 7.00pm Book Club, new members welcome.
Sun 18th Nov 2-4pm Afternoon Tea with Service to Dedicate the lovely New Church Windows.

Weekly

Tuesday 10.00am – 10.30am Prayers for our Community
10.30am – 11.30 Community Café
3rd Sunday of the month 5.30pm Family Service followed by F.A.F. at the Manse

Coming soon - **Knit and Natter** - watch this space!

Lingdale Prayer Pointers

Week beginning...

5th November – For all those who come to the Knit and Natter, the Book Club and the Community Café, that we will know how to care for them and be Christ to them by just being ourselves.

12th November – For all the people who have contributed to the new church windows, and that the special afternoon tea and dedication service this Sunday will attract people to come and take part, acknowledging that this is their church and we are here for them too.

19th November – For all the church members, and all those who are associated with our fellowship.

26th November – We pray for Advent beginning at the end of the week, and for ideas of how to share the message of Advent and Christmas with people of all ages in the village.

St Andrew's

Annual Bazaar

**17th .November
11.30am - 1.30pm**

We still need donations for raffle, tombola, bric-a-brac and cake stalls.

Any *helpers* would also be gratefully appreciated. Proceeds are in aid of church funds.

Flower Arranging

Instead of our usual Ladies Fellowship meeting we are having a Flower Arranging Demonstration from Karen Neville on Wednesday 7th November at 7.30pm. There will be Tea/ Coffee and a raffle.

Tickets £5.00 available from Una, Doreen, Sheila and Joan. Proceeds to Zoe's Place. Please come along.

Get Well

We send our get well wishes to Eleanor after her recent operation. We hope that there will be no more!!

Looking forward to seeing you back at church.

Shoe Boxes

We must finish all the shoe boxes within the next two weeks. Shona would be grateful if anyone interested would contact her within that time.

Coffee For Charity

| | | |
|----------|------------------|--------|
| 23rd Sep | Teesside Hospice | £15.00 |
| 30th Sep | Chain | £20.46 |
| 14th Oct | .Boy's Brigade | £22.90 |

Please note it takes £2.50 for each completed shoe box to reach its destination.

St Andrew's Calendar

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| Thu 1 st Nov | 2.00pm | Prayer Meeting, 31 Roseberry Mews |
| Wed 14 th Nov | 7.30pm | Elders' meeting |
| Sat 17 th Nov | 11.30-1.30 | Bazaar |
| Wed 28 th Nov | 1 - 3pm | Knit 'n' Natter |
| Wed 28 th Nov | 2.30pm | Worship at Kirkley Lodge |
| Thu 29 th Nov | 7.30pm | Group Elders meeting at Guisborough |
| Wed .12 th Dec | 7.30pm | Christmas Concert Admission £2.00 |

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

| | 4-Nov | 11-Nov | 18-Nov | 25-Nov | 2-Dec |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Marion | 10.00am Marion WT | L Bustard Parade | N Johnson Communion | C Morrison Meeting | K Harris |
| Guisbo | 9.30am J Harper Communion | C Morrison | C Morrison | Guis Folk | N Johnson Communion |
| Redcar | 11.00am C Morrison | C Morrison | C Morrison | N Johnson | C Morrison United |
| Lingdale | 5.30pm tba | K Harris Communion | C Morrison Family Serv | C Morrison | C Morrison |

Material for the December/January Magazine to church editors by Sunday 11th November please
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