

# *Group News*



**\* 2021 \* October \* 2021 \***

The monthly magazine for:

**Guisborough URC**

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

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

# *Pastoral Letter*

‘God chose the foolish of this world in order to shame the wise, the weak to shame the strong, the lowest and the despised - those considered as nothing - to quash those who consider themselves something, so that nobody may boast before Him’ 1 Corinthians 1 27-29

It looked like a pile of old junk, - a curious assortment of what might be called bric-a-brac and cast offs, - barely worth a second glance. Clearly, however, some people saw things differently for there was quite a queue outside waiting for the doors to open and the mad scramble to begin.

When I first came to the North East as a teacher, I joined a school for young people with special needs set in what might be called a depressed area. I never felt comfortable at those jumble sales, for I became keenly aware that for some people the goods on sale represented all that they could afford, - and the sales were a fact of life in a school that needed to raise money for the things that our young people needed but were not able to be provided from the amount of money we received from the local authority/government.

I learned something useful, however, from the experience, - namely that what might seem useless to one person can be anything but to someone else; a lesson that is equally valid when it comes to assessing people. All too easily we write people off, judging them by our own set of values and concluding that they fail to pass muster.

Strangely, we can do the same to ourselves, convinced that there is no way that God can possibly use us. God, however, invariably has other ideas, - able to use people in the most unexpected and surprising ways.

We should never consider ourselves, - or anyone else, - as useless for as far as God is concerned ‘useless’ is a word that doesn’t exist!

Grace and peace to you all. Shalom

Jan

# *Redcar*

## **Thanks To Norma**

Thank to Norma for providing a lovely tea and cakes on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September at her home. The weather was kind and we enjoyed a lovely afternoon. There were several people there from other churches and when I looked around it was like a busy “pop in”.

## **Redcar Pop In**

We have not yet opened the pop in as we do not have enough people to run it. Originally it was a collaboration between the Catholic Church on Lobster Road, Coatham C of E Church and Redcar URC but in the last few years has been mainly run by Redcar. By the time this magazine is issued we will hopefully have had a meeting with Redcar Baptist Church to try to get something organised with them. Watch this space as they say.

## **Congratulations**

Congratulations to Dot & Andy’s grandson, Brian, on his GCSE results. He is now studying for a BTech 3 in Public Service at Middlesbrough College and enjoying his course. He hopes to join the RAF when he has finished.

Also Cath’s grandson Kristian started at Nottingham University in September. He is starting a Masters Degree in Dietetics and Nutrition. Good luck Kristian.

## To Travel Or Not To Travel, A Modern Dilemma

Anyone that knows me also knows that I love to travel and I love my holidays. I was born on a Thursday so I have “far to go” and also I get my love of holidays from my father.

Whether it is a day in Whitby, a trip up to Sunderland to see a show, a trip down to Bristol to see my cousin or a few days somewhere else in the UK, I love to travel. However I also love to visit new countries, which often necessitates flying. Nowadays we are constantly made aware of our “carbon footprint” and made to feel guilty for flying. On the other hand if everyone stopped travelling, there is the impact on a whole industry and consequent job losses to consider.

The furthest I have travelled west is Alaska. This consisted of a flight from Manchester to Heathrow, then a long haul flight to Seattle and a further long flight to Anchorage in Alaska. The holiday consisted of some very long coach journeys within Alaska and The Yukon in Canada as well as two impressive rail journeys. The furthest I have travelled east is St. Petersburg in Russia, this was on a cruise ship so I don't know that “footprint”. The furthest I have travelled north is Alta in Norway, which is in the Arctic Circle, again this was by cruise ship and the furthest I have travelled south is Benidorm in Spain by coach.

However my carbon footprint is partially offset by the fact that I have never learnt to drive and have never owned a car. The vast majority of my journeys are by public transport. I also have solar panels that produce a lot of the electricity that I use. So when things start to open up to travel, without the necessity to pay for expensive tests before, during and after the holiday, I think I will start my wanderings again.

*June Haverson*



# *Guisborough*

## **Into the light**

Yet another year has passed since last I wrote and we remain, in a slightly lighter grip of the contagion Covid. Our freedom reluctantly eased, giving us opportunity to meet with increased numbers more readily, with or without our veiled faces depending on location and airflow.

This is not the first nor will it be the last time the world will be held to ransom by a virulent plague or disease. Its invisible venom spreading quietly throughout countries, borders and continents leaving devastation, grief and bewilderment in its wake.

“Death has come up into our windows, it has entered our places, to cut off the children from the streets and the young men from the squares.” [Jeremiah 9:20].

For centuries people have believed that disasters carry otherworldly messages, often perceived that the people of an environmental disaster have called for the catastrophe because of ill doing that the majority have not seen or known of; until a person of standing has spoken about the need for there to be a change in the common man’s thoughts or actions. This usually started relinquishing of lands, goods, money, or their very lives if summoned to take-up arms for a cause to rectify the disaster.

We have all heard conspiracy theories or even held our own beliefs about the origin of the COVID 19, a weapon of mass destruction leaked by inept laboratory assistants, or a virus, from a government’s alliance wanting to cull the earth’s population. Such theories fill our screens, radio frequencies or just general chit chat overheard through cotton cloth mumbled and distorted like global Chinese whispers.

In times of crisis throughout history from the great plague in 1347, the London plague in 1665, the Spanish flu in 1918 to the Syrian refugee

crisis in 2011. In these times economies disrupted, businesses closed and countless lives lost. Food stores dwindled as panic and fear took hold, Streets lay quiet, and the churches stood empty as people remained sequestered behind their closed doors waiting for a sign of safety and hope.

Whatever the source of such an inordinate event we have slowly learned to live and learn through them.

What have we learned?

Fear has been the greatest obstacle. Understanding the government requests to abide by their guidelines especially when social isolation was thrust upon us. Our lives, families, jobs, were thrown into disarray as we heard daily the death toll. The mental health of countless in turmoil as if propelled like a bullet from a gun landing unknown and unclaimed. Where was God? Why so many deaths? Why couldn't I hold the hand of my wife, husband, child as they died amongst strangers though gentle and caring but not the person they lived and loved with. Do not put the Lord your God to the test [Deuteronomy 6:16].

Thankfully in modern times with access to information we are wiser about derivations of viruses and seismic events and the effects of global warming. We have access to world-wide information telling us minute by minute the number of deaths, our resources, cost, and implications. With a bombardment of evidence, facts, and statistics.

Holly and Phil showed us how to wash our hands, Joe Wicks gave us recipes and exercises. We watched tirelessly to see if the graphs shown by Chris Witty made any sense and why he could not have used a mouse to move the next slide instead of saying 'next slide please'.

The wonders of the modern world have developed vaccines to enable us with two episodes of discomfort to go out into the world and feel more confident in our surroundings and those we are amongst, although be it socially distanced.

But where was the mother church?

Historians have suggested that the Antonine Plague of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, which might have killed a quarter of the Roman Empire, led to the spread of Christianity, as Christians cared for the sick thus showing the gentle caring nature of those who followed in Christ's teachings and enhancing the sentiment of a just and benevolent God whose followers offered succour during times of hardship and despair.

Where was mother church?

Isolation and social distancing closed the doors to the churches, mosques, synagogues and gurdwaras. But was the media banished? How amazing it would have been to be offered a word of support daily for those who had lost a family member. Encouragement and praise for the people who continued to work such as the NHS, emergency services, lorry drivers, shopkeepers and more, united in faiths just offering support and thanks, no sermons required just a presence to show all is not lost and that hope survives.

As we have resumed our services there is a noticeable reduction in numbers. Not due to restrictions in the per capita allowance but a lethargy in the disposition of followers. Confidence has dwindled due to isolation, sensory deprivation in so much as people cannot touch, hug or place a kind hand upon another. No prompts with facial expression, particularly for the deaf or hard of hearing. Restrictions in visiting loved ones has caused further isolation and depression has slowly leached into homes further depleting emotional vitality thus requiring sustenance of belief and devotion.

Now is the time for hope and faith and a time to contemplate what has gone from our lives and what needs nurturing. We have stayed behind closed doors and now will venture out into the tentative, though willing arms of our church.

Together we affix our fractured faith with the bond of friendship and love of our members. Learning together a new way of inclusion and conviction of belief.

Where is the church?      We have always been here!

*Angela Etwell*

## Duty rota October 2021

	Worship	Welcome/door Vestry/notices		
<b>Communion</b>				
3rd October	Ken & Margaret	Darren	Ray	Jenny
10th October	Guis Folks	Ray	Peter	
17th October	B Reynolds	Martin	Maureen	
24th October	B Stephenson	Sandra	Jenny	
31st October	Ray Tunncliffe	Joyce	Barbara	

# *St Andrew's*

## Harvest Festival 10th October 2021 - 10.00am

We look forward to the Boy's Brigade joining us for our Annual Harvest Festival Service. Gifts of food for the Middlesbrough Food Bank will be most welcome.

Material for the November Magazine to church editors by Sunday  
17th October please

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