

# *Group News*



*\* 2017 \* September \* 2017 \**

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)

## Moderator's Blog

Towards the end of July, I spent a day visiting our church in the town where this statue celebrates one of the products the town is famous for. Do you know where I was?

This was the first time I had to preach two different sermons in one day ... I know there will be a number of ministers out there saying: welcome to the real world!

I preached at the morning service in Loughborough URC, which was led by their minister Revd Elizabeth Thomson. In the afternoon, I preached at the service to mark Mike Playdon's 50th anniversary of his ordination, which was led by the Synod Moderator, Revd Peter Meeks. I have known Mike for many years, so it was a joy to take part in his celebration. His last pastorate before his retirement (Cores End), was in the neighbouring church to the one where I worship, Trinity High Wycombe. The service was followed by a delightful tea which gave me time to circulate and chat.



*Loughborough URC Community Centre sign*

Following the tea, I visited the Soup Kitchen, held on the premises every Sunday evening by local Loughborough University students. It was good to see the students getting involved with the homeless people of Loughborough. It was equally good to see how Elizabeth engaged with both the students and the homeless guests (whom she knew all by name). Other church members also get involved with other lettings when they had a mission context. Is this a new model for small churches where some of the mission activities are 'outsourced' to other groups – outsourced but not abdicated as the church retains a significant involvement in the activity? Well done, Loughborough.

Blessings,

Alan Yates

URC General Assembly Moderator

# *From National Church*

## **Celebrating what we achieve together**

### **Thank you for all that you give**

#### **Thank you**

Thank you for all that you give. For the time, the love and the money that is poured into local United Reformed churches week by week. Without the resources that are generously provided by you and the rest of the church family, the life of the local – and the central – United Reformed Church could not continue to operate and serve as it now does. Thank you.

The URC may be a relatively small Church, but its achievements – both locally and nationally – are substantial. We are ‘punching above our weight’ in many areas, not least in our commitment to social justice, illustrated through the work of the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) in areas as diverse as foodbanks, housing and refugees; the continuing innovation

of the church related community work (CRCW) programme; large scale events like The Big Day Out and the URC’s associate partnership in the Greenbelt festival as well as initiatives like the celebration of Constance Coltman’s centenary and Walking the Way. Alongside all these high profile success stories is the support of local churches, not least through funding the stipends of ministers and ensuring they are assured of reliable pensions and adequate housing in retirement. And, in addition to these things, we also invest in the long-term future of individuals – from training our ordained ministers and lay preachers to giving advice to new church treasurers.

The above list gives an idea of the many things the URC is involved in – there’s too many to list here – but all were started as

a recognition and outworking of God's never-ending grace to us; all came to fruition knowing that they would benefit some, but not all, and all were made possible because of the time and money you give to the URC's work in mission and ministry. Thank you again.

The URC is a big family, and like a family, it's at its best when it works together, everyone playing their part by working to their strengths and giving what and when they can. Not everything your money is used for will directly benefit you; and some expenditure won't even appeal to you. But that's the way it is with families – we seek to express our unity, our love for one another and our mutual commitment by supporting each other's interests.

### **The basis of your gifts**

Love and time are vital for the family life of the Church – but so is money. And it's money that this leaflet focuses on. In the URC, part of the money that you give, week by week, month by month, is sent to the national finance team working out of Church House, and added to the

ministry and mission fund (better known as 'M&M'). Most of what the Church achieves in terms of mission and ministry is paid for from this fund.

Through the giving of each church member, local congregations contribute to the M&M fund according to their ability to pay. The ministry that is available and affordable is allocated across the synods and then deployed within the Synods according to mission priorities. This covenant together is certainly very different from a consumer model, where the rich can always have more than those with more limited resources. We believe that it is important that all are willing to share. The URC's adoption of this approach means that not only do we express our support for each other through M&M, but everyone can truly celebrate all that the denomination achieves – because it has been achieved together.

### **How do we spend our money?**

In 2016 local churches gave a total of £19.3m to the M&M fund. The consistency and faithfulness of this giving is greatly

appreciated. In 2016 the URC spent £21.1m divided between:

- 82% Ministry
- 10% Education & Learning
- 5% Mission programmes
- 2% Children & Youth work
- 1% Publishing

If you would like more information on what the M&M money was spent on, please speak to your local church treasurer, who has been sent more detailed figures.

### **How much should I give?**

We are looking to encourage ‘giving with grace’ rather than being prescriptive. However, on several occasions General Assembly has suggested that giving 5% of after tax income is a useful benchmark. If you are interested in further exploring this question, either as an individual, or in small groups, then there are two useful booklets on the stewardship pages (see [bit.ly/urcsteward](http://bit.ly/urcsteward)) of the URC website: *To tithe or not to tithe* and *Giving to the Church*.

### **What next?**

Aside from churches and individuals making use of the stew-

ardship booklets highlighted above, you might be interested to learn that the planned materials for Walking the Way will include an exploration of ‘giving’ as a core habit of Christian discipleship.

### **Any questions?**

We hope that, on reading this, you feel proud to be part of the URC family – of this community of disciples who believe that money is to be given where it is needed, to best serve our communal needs. If you have any questions on what you have read in this leaflet, or would like to give us more general feedback, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Ian Hardie, URC Treasurer, or John Samson, the Chief Finance Officer, by contacting Bea Minta in the Church House finance office on 020 7916 8644 or at [beatrice.minta@urc.org.uk](mailto:beatrice.minta@urc.org.uk)

Further resources on stewardship are available at:

[www.urc.org.uk/stewardship](http://www.urc.org.uk/stewardship)

*Produced by the URC’s communications department on behalf of the finance committee, June 2017*

# *Synod Prayers*

- 3<sup>rd</sup> September: Synod Trust and for the work of its members, including the Trust Chair, Revd James Breslin and Trust Secretary, Dr Andrew Hamnett
- 10<sup>th</sup> September: St James's URC, Newcastle; St Andrew's URC, Kenton; Revd James Breslin
- 17<sup>th</sup> September: Longframlington URC; Rothbury URC; St Andrew's URC, Glanton; Revd Ed Butlin
- 24<sup>th</sup> September: PCM, Lay training and evening classes at Khovo in Maputo Northern Baptist Regional Minister, Revd John Clayton

## **Group Day Trip**

The East Cleveland Group Day Trip to Pickering has now been rearranged and will take place on Saturday 9th September 2017.

There is lots to do - sightseeing, shopping, possibility of a short trip on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway plus plenty of places to eat. The day will end with a short service at Pickering United Reformed Church at 4.00p.m. before returning home.

Anyone interested please add your name to the lists on the church notice boards or telephone Ken and Margaret Harris on 01287 638500.

The coach will leave Redcar at 9.30am, Marton at 10.00am and Guisborough at 10.15am.

# Guisborough

## Praying together

Earlier in the summer, I put some ideas together for a short reflection in one of our Guis Folks services based on some verses from Matthew's gospel, chapter 11, verses 28 – 30 in particular.

Some weeks before, in Junior church we had discussed what worried us, making us anxious. Our young people are becoming more comfortable about talking openly in the group. They said they could be upset by scary world events, aspects of school life and relationships with friends.

Both Sandra and I shared what made us anxious too, agreeing that sometimes we felt powerless to deal with what we saw or read about in the media.

We decided however that one thing all of us young and old can do is to pray.

In these verses from Matthew, Jesus asks us to humbly bring our fears, our cares for the pain of others, the disturbing violence and uncertainties of modern life, to him. We must not allow ourselves to be damaged by the weight of what we cannot do to improve things. Prayer passes our concerns through Jesus to the One who can make a difference and wants us to be his tools.

	Vestry	Communion	Door	Flowers
Sept 3rd	J Basham		J Reynolds	D Thompson
Sept 10th	D Beattie		M Burrows	P Etwell
Sept 17th	M Burrows	B Ward	D Thompson	D Collins
Sept 24th	M Houston		B Ward	harvest
Oct 1st	R Tunnicliffe		D Beattie	J Basham

By the time we come to the first Sunday of October, all 3 churches will have heard Revd Jane Rowell leading worship. Jane will have introduced herself to our church family as our Mission Enabler, provided by Northern Synod to help us in ‘A way forward’.

Before we meet her we as a group are asked to pray and share ideas about how we want to add to our work for Jesus and how Jane can help us to achieve this. This process does not threaten what we already do and how we worship but will help Jane to know what we consider to be good use of our existing resources to add to our mission to spread the word and work of God.

*Everyday God, through the quiet influence of your Spirit, may we find new and better ways of journeying together.*

(adapted from Daily Devotions).

*Joyce Basham*

<b>Guisborough Calendar</b>		
Tue 19 <sup>th</sup> September	7.15pm	Church Meeting in the hall
Sun 24 <sup>th</sup> September		Harvest celebration with Revd Norma
<b>Weekly</b>		
Thursdays	9.30am – 11.30am	Market Day Coffee Morning
Thursdays	11.30am	<b>Quiet Time in Church.</b> Prayers and reflections with Maureen, Madge, Ken and others. Details on church notice board

## **Remembering Joan Audrey Bulmer (nee Cousins) 1932 – 2017**

On Wednesday August 9<sup>th</sup> Joan's funeral took place in our church. Joan was our longest serving member. Although it is thought she attended from the late 1950's, she was received into membership at a Deacon's meeting of Guisborough Congregational Church on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1960.

50 years later we celebrated with her when Revd Meg Robb presented her with flowers, a card and cake to mark that special milestone.

Joan was born in Leicestershire where in her early 20's she met John Bulmer from Guisborough. He was stationed close by during his National Service. After they married in 1954, they moved to Guisborough. Joan worked in the Ministry of Pensions in the town and John on the railway in Middlesbrough.

Joan served our church well in many roles. Over the years she took Junior church classes, was treasurer to the Ladies Fellowship and booking clerk, as well as being a regular baker.

Joan and John had 3 children, Paul and twins Kevin and Karen. We keep them all in our prayers.

Joan and John were a devoted couple. Only in the last four and a half years were they parted when deteriorating health meant Joan's best care was provided in Moorlands Nursing Home in the town. John supported her there daily until he too needed extra care. They shared some time in the home together until John's death early last year.

Joan's family chose this verse as a fitting epitaph to be read at her funeral service.

'I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance and I have kept the faith'. 2 Timothy; chapter 4, verse 7

# *St Andrew's*

## **Fundraising**

## **Congratulations**

Thank you to all who contributed, Congratulations and best supported and helped with our wishes for the future to Strawberry Tea on the 15th July Oliver Wheeler on his recent (£254.00) and coffee morning on graduation from university. 10th August (£120). A total of Next year he moves to Leeds £374.00 was raised for church funds. to train as a solicitor

## **Coffee for Charity**

18th Jun	London Fire Disaster	£69.86
25th Jun	London Fire Disaster	£28.00
2nd Jul	Leprosy Mission	£11.00
9th Jul	Neuroblastoma	£20.00
16th Jul	Larchfield Community	£23.00
23rd Jul	Coatham House	£20.00
6th Aug	Rosemary Fund	£18.80
13th Aug	Teesside Hospice	£16.00

## **St Andrew's Calendar**

### **Weekly/Monthly**

Boys Brigade

Details available from ministers  
and church elders

# *Redcar*

## **Bazaar Donations**

Some forward planning for our November Bazaar donations of any items of 'luxury type' food which have a good forward date would be gratefully accepted.

Thank you

## **Welcome**

Very best wishes and blessings to Evelyn who has moved back to Redcar, we hope you will be very happy.

## **Redcar Calendar**

### **Weekly**

Thursday            9.30am Quiet Prayers  
                         10.00-11.30am Pop-in Centre open to all for refreshment and chat  
                         2.00pm Prayer Group at the home of Catherine - all are welcome.

# *Preachers*

	<b>Marton</b> <b>10.00am</b>	<b>Guisborough</b> <b>10.00am</b>	<b>Redcar</b> <b>11.00am</b>
3-Sep	MartonWT Church Meeting	Guisborough Folk	Norma Johnson
10-Sep	Jane Rowell Parade	W Middlemiss	Brian Stephenson Meeting
17-Sep	Margaret Harris Communion	Ken Harris Communion	Pam Stenson
24-Sep	Dave Elliott	Norma Johnson Harvest	Margaret Harris
1-Oct	Jan Harper	Jane Rowell Communion	Catherine Milburn

Material for the October Magazine to church editors by Sunday  
10th September please

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