

## Guisborough URC June 2021 Newsletter.



At last, after 14 months, Guisborough United Reformed Church is open again for Sunday services. The Rev'd's Ken and Margaret Harris led the worship on Sunday, 23rd, May, on the occasion of Pentecost, formerly known as Whitsuntide, and now celebrated as the birthday of the church.

In his address to the congregation Ken spoke of Pentecost as: *"a great mystery of faith journey..... the breath of God changing for ever those who felt its power, as it can change for ever those who feel it's power today."* St Luke says how the disciples were then able speak to people in their various languages - a clear message for us today of the essential fellowship must have with everyone - those we meet and those we don't. This is well illustrated by the message from the scientists about the pandemic: "We are not safe until we are all safe." We are interdependent upon one another - a fact from which must flow a natural, essential and beneficial mutual respect.

### Guisborough Bridge Association

At a Bridge EGM meeting on the 7th, June, several matters of importance were to be considered:

A change in the charitable status of the Association and a change in the name from: The Guisborough Bridge Association to ***The Guisborough Bridge.***

In addition proposals for the purchase of a building were to be put forward - possibly, 10, Challoner Street.

### St Paulinus.

#### ***Establishing a Justice & Peace Group.***

St Paulinus have set themselves the task of forming a group of local people who will make a commitment to work towards the needs of justice & peace where ever there are problems within our area and the wider world.

*The stated aims are, viz:*

To be a place in our parish for prayer and reflection on the issues of justice and peace and, foremost, pray in a practical way - by taking action to love and serve others.

*Membership:* Open to anyone who shares these aims and is happy to work within the ethos of our Catholic parish.

### **The Art of Busyness**

We have all heard it - ask somebody to do something and they may sometimes say "Sorry, I can't do that, I'm too busy." And of course this is something we, ourselves, will have said many times in the past. So, welcome to the *"Art of Busyness,"* it is a well developed skill that most of us possess in abundance.

A commentator, specialising in the study of office politics, described frequent and busy executive meetings as the perfect device for avoiding doing any serious work. Further into the study into such matters focussed on the idea that presenting the best image of appearing to be busy was considered most important. The number one example of this phenomenon was of a person walking briskly down an office corridor holding a single piece of paper by the corner with it fluttering in the air as they sped along. Nothing looks busier than this - declared the commentator. The reality of course is rather more mundane - something that person habitually does or, perhaps, something desperate? The paper is a vitally important document, for a client, that must to be in the last postal collection of the day - and the worker has just carelessly deleted the company's copy from the computer. Must get to the scanner or photocopier immediately to get that crucial second copy in order to restore the original. But can this be described as being busy?

In Reform, the United Reformed Church's national magazine, there is a regular column entitled: Commitment-Phobe, where an anonymous woman - who has moved on from atheism into faith, comments on church life. In the February edition she writes about: Church busyness - saying that: *"Being involved in the*

*Sunday service feels like having to put on a show each week, but with different content, the cast and technical team constantly changing, and an amateur directing team who are happy to make changes at the last minute with no thought for their performer nerves or technical consequences. I suspect that I am not supposed to feel like this but some large part of me does."* This is a good example of busyness - which raises the question: is all of this really necessary - or are there other ways in which as a church fellowship we can come together in support of each other week by week. Is Sunday worship something we come to as recipients, with the opportunity of joining in the musical choruses - or should there be more to it than this?

In the poem by W.H. Davies he writes:

What is this life, if full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.  
No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep and cows.  
.....no time to see at beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can

dance.....

Having the time to pause and think carefully is an important part of faith in our Lord, Jesus and a crucially, effective way of strengthening our faith. It also gives us the opportunity to reflect on what we are doing at the present time and may have been doing for a long time - a present habit. We must ask questions like why are we doing this? How did it start out and what was its original purpose? And is this still relevant for me, for us today?

So pause the busyness, put it on hold for a while, so that we can have clear thoughts on where God and the Holy Spirit are taking us now. Stare a bit, look around for some inspiration, and we may be surprised at how creative we can be. In the present troubled times new ideas are in much demand.

## A Brief Look Through Our History



*The Church in 1905, as it would have looked in when built in 1811 - and before the reconstruction of the same year.*

Guisborough United Reformed Church, in Westgate, was founded at the time of the Christian Evangelical Revival of the late 18th, century - a movement that came into being as a response to the differing views on spirituality within the Church of England.

Supporters of the revival, known as dissenters, preached the idea that all people could have direct access to God without the need or help from priests - and by so doing be effective in practicing the values of faith in Christ.

In 1796 the Evangelical Society of London, on being informed of the poor state of religious observance in Cleveland, sent William Norris, an evangelist, as a revivalist preacher for our area. His fervent oratory attracted many people back to faith in Jesus - and so by 1798 a new church fellowship appeared in Guisborough. In the following year the Protestant Dissenting Meeting House was opened in Westgate - funded by a wealthy local widow, Elizabeth Dunn. On his departure in 1802 he left the fellowship in the charge of James Scott, a school teacher and lay preacher.

Later, in 1805, Rev William Hinners, an independent minister from Edinburgh, came into the area and took an interest in this new cause. By 1811 he had established churches in Great Ayton and Stokesley and managed the erection of the present building which was opened by a renowned, popular Yorkshire preacher, James Jackson, on Thursday, 31st, October of that year.

Known as the Ebernezer Chapel it served as an independent free church in the town until the late 19th,

century, when it joined the Congregational Union to enjoy the benefits of support, as part of a national organisation.

In 1905, under the ministry of the Rev Ridley, the church was substantially reconstructed; given a new frontage, pews, heating system, pipe organ and stained glass window - plus a larger hall at the rear of the building.

During WWI the congregation provided a rest centre for troops in training locally and later, under the ministry of Rev Albert Ore, was grouped with churches in Great Ayton and Lazenby. By 1938 it had over 60 members and 90 children in the Sunday School.

In 1972 the church joined with the Presbyterian Church of England to become the United Reformed Church. This was the first coming together of separate Christian denominations since the division of the church during the Reformation in the 16th, century. A further change of organisation took place in the 1990's when several United Reformed Churches, in the area, were brought together to form the East Cleveland Group.

Today, the Group is composed of churches in Guisborough, Marton and Redcar. During this long period the church's presence in the town has been an available source of spiritual support for the people of Guisborough - and a total of 36 successive ministers have served towards this end.

### SERVICES IN JUNE

Service times 10.00am. The service on Sunday, 27th, June, will be in a shortened form followed by a church meeting. Please make every effort to attend.

The services are open to anyone. Please come on any Sunday for worship, or to learn more about Jesus, or just to meet some new friends.

## GUISBOROUGH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



*Founded 1798*

56, Westgate, Guisborough.

**News Letter**

**June 2021**

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