

Guisborough 210th Anniversary

The last time our anniversary was on a Sunday was 2010, so this year, on the 31st of October, we made it a special occasion. The worship followed the pattern of our Guisfolk services where various members take part. This worked very well although, with two heaters not working in the church sanctuary, the atmosphere was cool in the physical sense - but not enough to dampen our enthusiasm for the celebration.

The Bible readings were based on texts used by two ministers who preached on the inaugural day Thursday, the 31st, October, 1811, when people entered the building for the first time - the Rev James Jackson from Green Hammerton near York and a Mr Neale of Thirsk.

There were memories of children going on a Sunday School trip to Saltburn in July, 1872 and the old hymns they would have sung. A short historical presentation described the first day in the new building and our earlier origins - being formed as a result of an evangelical campaign in 1798.

The sermon was an encouragement for the fellowship, in these difficult times, to 'take a risk for Jesus.' Jenny Reynolds, our secretary, gave a prayer for the future with Dorothy Collins, a senior member, lighting the candles on the birthday cake. A happy occasion.

“Climate crisis demands deep-seated transformations.” say faith leaders.

In a letter to G20 leaders, global religious leaders representing half 1 billion Christians in more than 100 countries one that rising global temperatures will have increasingly disastrous consequences on impoverished and vulnerable communities that contribute least to the climate crisis. The letter, organised by the world Council of churches of which the United Reformed Church is a member, was written just before the start of COP26, taking place from the 31st, October to the 12th of November in Glasgow. In it, the faith leaders state: “Many of our congregations are already experiencing devastating and intensifying climate

impacts and many also responding with concrete actions and proposals.” reads the letter. “The root cause of the climate emergency is the current development model and ideology that is founded upon fossil fuel driven economic growth.” (Which must end)

Getting ready for the URC’s 50th Anniversary

The United Reformed Church will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2022. Marking our 50th year can help us to plan for the future pursue our ecumenical vision and ask how we will continue to be an active engaged and faithful Christian presence in our communities’ say Francis Brian and URC deputy general secretary Mission and Andy Jackson head of communications.

As part of the celebrations. song writers composers rapists poets quires and bands are invited to submit an entry into the URC at 50 worship resources competition. The closing date for submissions is eighth of April 2020 to see www.urch.org.uk/50.HTML for details.

COP26 - Climate Change International Conference - Glasgow in November.

This conference is crucial for us all and most importantly for future generations. The sermon following was preached at St Columba’s United Church. Billingham, in September and covers the issues to be discussed in Glasgow:

Sermon: Saving Our Harvest

Anyone here had experience of hearing an old fashioned ‘Fire and Brimstone’ sermon being delivered? (“Yes,” said a member of the congregation “It was in the western isles of Scotland many years ago.”)

Just imagine that famous poster of WWI “Kitchener needs You!” - and a fiery Welsh preacher in the style of David Lloyd George - the Welsh Wizard looking you straight in the eye as he delivered his Hell fire message. How would it go?

“Hell, yes that that very Hell is the final arbiter of all truth. There at Judgement Day we stand before God with all pretence stripped away. Spiritually naked before our Maker and others - all our sins recorded. and nothing hidden. The fire of Hell will

come in that feeling of utter shame as we quake before the Lord our God.”

In 1741 Jonathan Edwards delivered such a sermon entitled “Sinners in the hands of an Angry God.” Preach to his own congregation in Enfield, Massachusetts the sermon was said to have been the catalyst for the first “Great Awakening” it combined vivid imagery of hell with observations of the world and tying all of this to quotations from Scripture.

The “Awakening” was a great revival of faith in Christianity, with a great feeling of the concept of sin and the need for salvation through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus on the cross crucified.

The question is where could such a sermon be preached today? There is one congregation waiting in Glasgow in November when the nations of the world hope to come to an agreement to prevent the disastrous consequences of climate change, which will effect us all. In recent times we have seen terrible floods in Germany on our TVs and also wildfires at various places around the world. The danger signs are clear.

How will we have good harvests If such conditions are allowed to get worse. Our Prime Minister will share the conference and most recently quoted as saying that there was a 60% chance of success. Not good enough.

Perhaps the late Jonathan Edwards should start the conference giving all delegates a clear message of the stark future if we, his people of the world can’t put aside our personal interests and concerns in order to work realistically for the common good. At this time perhaps we are, as Jonathan Edward said so long ago: “All sinners in the hands of an angry God.”

However, in all such sermons there will be a small glimmer of hope! Despair can never be on the agenda of any preacher. People often rise above desperate situations to save the day - so we can have the prospect of an effective solution to climate change - meaning we can save the harvest.’ - a harvest on which we all depend.

In the bible reading we have Jesus’s parable of the ‘Rich Fool.’ This story does have parallels at this present, critical, time when we make the effort to save our world from catastrophe.

The rich fool never saw beyond himself. This parable is full of words such as me and mine which fool was aggressively self-centred. A familiar criticism of a self-centred person was: ‘There was too much ego in his cosmos.’

The one thing that never enters his man’s head, when he has such a surplus of goods was to give any of them away - the very reverse of Christianity. instead of finding

happiness in giving he tried to conserve it by keeping. Not for him the quote: "God loves a cheerful giver."

The rich man was a person who did not see beyond his world. All his plans were based on his vision for life here, in the present, but nothing beyond this - or for the existing world around him.

At the conference in Glasgow in November the main issue will be the competing interests of the various nations present. Will the rich nations give enough financial aid to poor countries so they can reduce their dependency on fossil fuels?

And it is then at the message from second Corinthians comes into play: how the general principles of generosity work. Paul insists that no one has ever had a loser for being generous. Giving is like sowing seed. A person who sows with a soaring hand cannot hope for anything but a meagre harvest - but for those who sow generously will in time reap a generous return.

The New Testament is a very practical book and one of its features is that it is never afraid of the 'reward motive.' It never says that goodness is to no purpose. It is never forgotten that something new and wonderful enters into the life of anyone who accepts God's law as a command.

The rewards envisage are never material. not the wealth of things but the wealth of the heart and the spirit. So what will generosity offer? We will be rich in 'love' - generosity can cover a multitude of sins. We will be rich in friends - a generous heart will encourage the friendship of others. And we will be rich and help. The day will come when we may need help - and so what we have given will encourage a generous assistance. And we will be rich in our relationship with God.

Paul insists that it is a happy giver that God loves. Deuteronomy 15 states the duty of generosity towards a poor person: "Your heart shall not be grudging when you give to them." In other words it is the happy giver that God loves.

It is largely in this generosity to one another that I can see a way out of this impending disaster of global warming. Direction nations of the world helping the poor to meet the targets of sustainability.

We must come together to save our planet - and the harvest which sustains us all - or lose out separately.

Then here today what can we do? We can pray - put a power of prayer to good use. It has been said, in popular culture, when things are difficult that: It hasn't got a prayer - not a chance. But here, as we come together in worship - we who have faith know much better than that.

There are practical things we can do. We can write to our MP. Given the low esteem in which many of our politicians are held, this would not appear to be an effective course of action - but in practice most MPs to react, when a large number of letters appear on their desks on the same subject. It is then assumed, from experience, that each letter can represent as many as 100 other constituents who feel the same way - and so it is "action this day" when re-election comes to mind.

. In the wider world we have Prince William and his involvement in the Earth shot prize - Inspired by President Kennedy's Moon shot of the 60s. Prizes offered to people to come up with ideas to save the planet. Five Earth Shots - simple but ambitious goals for our planet, which if achieved by 2030 will improve life for us all and for generations to come. The prince stated that he 'could not look his children in the eye' if you hadn't attempted to do something to save the planet.

And for ourselves here, in this area, what can we do directly to help?

The Royal horticultural society offered 10 ways to be more sustainable in your garden. Plant a tree; water the way nature intended; go peat free; make your own compost; pull up a paving slab; have plant for pollinators; grow your own bunch of flowers; electrify your garden - not petrol driven tools; help map UK garden plant diversity; eat more homegrown food UK local and seasonal fruit and vegetables.

A lot to take in an remember - but the details can be easily found if we all take the time to look.

When Jonathan Edwards delivered his fire and brimstone sermon 208 years ago it inspired or reminded people of the concept of sin and the means of salvation is for Christ. Sin, such an old-fashioned word today and yet it encapsulates a simple idea against the selfishness of human nature. It is that selfishness and greed that has brought us to this present state. We utterly depend upon God's created world - we must cherish, preserve, and respect it. Amen.

SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER at 10.00am.

7th. Ian SmithThornaby Mission

14th. Remembrance Sunday....Donna Moore

21st. Rev Dr John Ellison.....

28th. Darren Thompson....Guis' URC member

Everyone will be welcome at our services.
Come for worship, or to learn about faith in Jesus,
or simply to find some good friends.

GUISBOROUGH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



Founded 1798

56, Westgate, Guisborough.

News Letter

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Secretary 01287 637273