

The Future of Ministry in the Teesside Area

Last month a meeting was convened in St Andrew's Mission, Thornaby to discuss the future of ministry for the United Reformed Churches both north and south of the river Tees. David Herbert, the Northern Province and Synod Moderator, chaired the meeting - proposing that the northern Hartlepool and Teesdale Group of churches be joined with the Southern East Cleveland Group of Churches to form one pastorate. The aim of this new administrative arrangement was to increase the likely hood that a full-time stipendiary minister may be called and appointed to serve the churches in our area.

The North Tees Group came into vacancy in April of this year and for East Cleveland it has been over five years without a minister. It has now become crucial that churches receive professional support and guidance to lead us forward as effective missionaries for Christ within our various local communities.

The churches included in this new Union are, viz: St George's, Hartlepool, St Columba's, Billingham, St Andrew's and St George's, Stockton, St Andrew's Mission, Thornaby, St Andrew's, Nunthorpe & Marton, Redcar URC and Guisborough United Reformed Church.

Let us now pray that this move bears fruit - the fruit of the spirit of God and a minister ready to tackle the needs and problems of today.

Rev'd Ken Harris - Retiring Preacher

At morning service on Sunday, 3rd, October, the Rev'd Ken Harris, a regular preacher for the fellowship of Guisborough United Reformed Church, announced his retirement as one of our worship leaders. In his valedictory address he spoke about the importance of Communion, the Lord's Supper, in the spiritual life of our fellowship. The 'Last Supper,' when Jesus enjoyed that final meal, with his disciples in the upper room, was also a farewell message - but he returned. No doubt we will see Ken from time to time in the future.

Ken came to Guisborough over twenty years ago after retiring as a minister in Blyth, Northumberland. As a church member he was active in leading worship on Sundays and the Thursday market day prayer meetings and other activities. In 2014 he became a member of St Andrew's & St George's United Reformed Church in Stockton, but continued to support our fellowship, as he had done earlier, in spiritual matters. During the pandemic he went online

to deliver a weekly Sunday service and prayers in the absence of a Thursday meeting.

We thank Ken for all of his hard work and commitment and wish him well in retirement.

The Bridge Association

After the limitations imposed on activities by the pandemic restrictions the Association is now able to operate normally. As before the pandemic the Bridge continues with its aims: to provide life and support in the heart of the Guisborough community. We aim to respond to local needs with projects for both young and old.

At this point in time the Bridge wishes to encourage people to explore the website to see the benefits available or to find opportunities to get involved.

CAAT

In the St Paulinus October Newsletter the hope is expressed that their 'Justice and Peace Group' will be revived now that Covid restrictions are eased. On the agenda for future discussion appeared the subject CAAT (Campaign Against the Arms Trade) This pressure group, which has been in existence since 1974, works to counter the commercial promotion of war and conflict.

At present the organisation is pursuing a legal challenge over the supply of UK weapons for the war in Yemen in the High Court. In terms of our Christian mission this could be a cause for our fellowship to discuss.

Faith Leaders demand climate action at COP26 in Glasgow

Faith leaders have joined together to demand climate action ahead of the COP26 meeting in Glasgow.

The Revd Claire Downing and Mr Peter Pay, Moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church (URC) made the declaration alongside leaders of every major Christian denomination and representatives from Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh communities.

The declaration states: "we remind governments of their commitments made in Paris in 2015 to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, and of Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Bioethics and Human Rights to protect the environment, the biosphere and biodiversity.

We call upon them to take the urgent action needed to avert the loss, damage, and forced migration threatened by climate change."

Here we see faith in action as religious leaders demand that political leaders put aside national interests in the cause of working for the benefit of people everywhere. True leadership demands difficult decisions to be made for the common good.

For the success of this crucial meeting we need to pray for its an effective outcome and agreements. We also need to consider what we can do, as individuals, to help. In our prayers remember to ask for a vision for the future and the will and effort act on any practical measures.

The future of us all - our children and descendants depend upon our effective action.

Anniversary.

On Sunday, 31st, October, it will 210 years since the church building was opened - an anniversary date to remember - and so now.....a brief look through our history.....,



Guisborough Church circa 1904 as it would have appeared when opened in 1811 and before the remodelling of the frontage in 1905.

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 October of 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 schoolteacher and lay preacher.



Rev James Jackson

Later, in 1805, Rev William Himmers, 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 Ebenezer 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 OCTOBER

Service times 10.00am

3rd, October: Revs Ken and Margaret Harris

10th, October: Guisfolk & Church meeting

17th, October: Jenny Reynolds

24th, October: B Stephenson

31st October: Ray Tunnicliffe - Anniversary.

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

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