

Group News



*December * 2023-4 * January*

The monthly magazine for:

Guisborough URC

56 Westgate, Guisborough, TS14 6AY: Church Secretary 01287 637273

Redcar URC

Station Road, Redcar, TS10 1RQ: Contact 07742 720090

St Andrew's URC, Nunthorpe and Marton

Cypress Road, Marton, TS7 8PD: Church Secretary 01642 550854

Our churches are members of the Cleveland Pastorate

Part of the URC Northern Synod – www.urch-northernsynod.org.uk

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Season's Greetings



Pastoral Letter

I am God and there is no other. I am God and there is none like me, pronouncing the end at the beginning and speaking at the dawn of time of things yet to be done, proclaiming "My will shall prevail and I will fulfil my purpose. I have spoken, and I will make it happen; I have planned, and I will accomplish it"

Isaiah 46.9-10 11b.

If we look at the labels on any medicine, we'll see a list of active ingredients. Without them our prescriptions would be useless, mere placebos. There is a parallel here with the words of the prophet Isaiah, who was able to speak with conviction of the ultimate fulfilment of God's purpose, because he knew that when God says He will do something, He does it, His Word always active! There is never any question of Him saying one thing and doing another, making a promise and then forgetting to honour it. He is wholly dependable, a God in whom we can put our trust.

This is the truth we celebrate at Advent and Christmas. These are seasons concerned with what God has done - not just what he promised but what he achieved! They speak of the God who has acted decisively in human history, wonderfully and unmistakably putting His Words into practice. God didn't just wish the world well and then leave it to get on with its own affairs. He didn't just tell us what we need to do and then expect us to struggle on as best we can. He didn't give fine-sounding promises that remained only promises. He revealed love in action, the Word made flesh. That living Word continues to be active today in our lives and in our world. He is a God who keeps His Word, and we can be confident that what He has pledged to do He will accomplish!

May the Lord bless you, with grace and joy this Christmas, and may 2024 be filled with good things for you.

Shalom

Jan

Synod Prayers

3 December

Methodist Darlington District: District Chair the Revd Richard Andrew.

10 December

St Columba's, Billingham; Church-Related Community Work Minister Ann Honey; St George's, Hartlepool; Stockton; St Andrew's Mission, Thornaby; St Andrew's, Nunthorpe & Marton; Guisborough; Redcar, and the Mission House.

17 December

Northgate, Darlington; Zion, Northallerton; Low Row with Keld.

24 December

Baptist Northern Association; Transitional Strategic Regional Minister the Revd Hayley Young.

31 December

Salvation Army North East Division; Divisional Commanders Majors David & Gillian Burns.

Christmas Day Worship

10am

Guisborough United Reformed
Church

A Short Christmas Day Service
to be led by Donna Moore

All Welcome

Advent Discussion

**Wednesday 6th December -
1.30pm**

Ken and Margaret Harris will lead an Advent discussion, at the home of Eleanor and Roger Wheeler.

Refreshments of Tea/Coffee plus cake will be served.

All are welcome to come and join us in sharing the season's message

Venue - 2c Gypsy Lane, Nunthorpe. (01642 300546). Enter Gypsy Lane near Nunthorpe Schools. After 0.5mile, pass Mayfield Drive; the drive is then on the right opposite the level crossing sign.

Advent Reading – The Jesse Tree

I bought copies of the Northumbria Community's two volume Celtic Daily Prayer quite a few years ago. I dipped in and out of the first one, *The Journey Begins*, but wasn't using it on a daily basis. Until the pandemic hit. When all other routines went out of the window I turned to the cycle of daily prayer to bring some stability when it felt there was none.

I don't follow all of the prayers but I do read the meditations for the daily office and I do use the daily readings. These readings give three bible passages and then a short commentary from a range of writers.

Last December I was using the second volume, *Farther up and Farther In* and the readings for the month were based on the Jesse Tree. The prayer book says that in many homes and churches it has become an Advent custom to use a small tree branch as a Jesse Tree, with pictures or ornaments representing the people and stories that anticipate the coming of Jesus.

I have got to admit that I had never heard of the Jesse Tree and I cannot remember ever seeing one.

Each of the readings are accompanied by a picture – it starts with the sun and moves on through the story of Abel, Noah, the coat of many colours, the tablets of the law to Bethlehem, the star and the nativity.



I found it such a lovely way to move through Advent, and as the introduction to the readings says, the story of the Jesse Tree can offset an increasingly commercial and secularised Christmas.

I haven't gone as far as to make a physical Jesse Tree but I will be returning to the readings again this December. A reminder of the true meaning of Christmas.

Susan Griffiths

Guisborough

On Saturday 28th of October a Coffee Morning a Historical Exhibition was held in the church to celebrate 225 years of Christian witness in Guisborough. The church sanctuary was set out with tables and chairs lining the east and west walls with a space to allow members of the public to circulate around the building viewing the various pictures, old photographs and documents displayed on the walls. Prominent amongst these were posters describing the pastorates of all leaders of our church from the Rev. William Norris, the Evangelist, who founded the fellowship, in 1798, to his lay successor, James Scott, the school master 1802 - 1805 and the first full minister, Rev. William Hinners, 1805 - 1824 - and onto our last minister, the Rev Catey Morrison, 2006 - 2017 - and now, at present, in vacancy. A total of 38 pastors.

The story of Guisborough United Reformed Church began when in the late 18th, century a contemporary writer described Cleveland has sadly neglected religiously. A student from Hoxon Academy, London. Mr Daniel Tyerman, on a visit to his hometown of Osmotherley during his college vacation, preached in some of the neighbouring villages with success and with his reports of the low-level of religious observance, sent an appeal for help to the Societas Evangelica, of London.

In making his appeal, for spiritual help in the area of Cleveland, Mr Tyerman was acting as a supporter of the Christian Evangelical Revival that sprang into being towards the end of the century. The people supporting this campaign were known as 'Dissenters' and committed to the notion of free-thought and the practical use of reason in understanding the will of God. They felt that the advocacy of the reign of reason was directed by God alone. For them it was an article of faith that any person - high or low - rich or poor has the means to communicate directly with their Lord Andrew's maker - without the need for help or intervention of a priest, bishop, or any other member of the clergy. It was a challenging doctrine, at the time, and many of these dissenters suffered greatly for their beliefs.

Daniel Tyerman's appeal for help, to the to the



Guisborough Calendar

Christmas Day 10.00am Service of worship led by Donna Moore

Weekly

Thursday from 9.30am Coffee in Church Hall
from 10.30am Church open for private prayer
11.30am Thursday Prayers led by Maureen and Ray.
Details on church notice board

Societas Evangelica of London, produced almost instant results with William Norris an evangelist, soon arriving to join Mr Tyerman at his home in Osmotherly in October, 1796. As a revivalist preacher 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 Dissenters Meeting House was opened in Westgate funded by a wealthy local widow, Elizabeth Dunn. This house, long since demolished, was situated about 25 metres east of the present church building on a site now occupied by Calverts Carpets. In 1805 William Hinners, a minister from Edinburgh, came to Cleveland and took an interest in the Guisborough fellowship to the extent that a larger church needed to be built. This church, the Ebenezer Chapel, was opened by a renowned, popular Yorkshire preacher, James Jackson, on Thursday, the 31st of October 1811.

That in essence is the story of the founding of our church in Guisborough - and as part of the historical exhibition, a short playlet was performed to illustrate an event when the application for a license to build a meeting house was brought before the local magistrate. William Norris, the evangelist, presented the petition, supported by Elizabeth Dunn, a local wealthy widow who offered to have it built in her yard on the north side of Westgate.



The play was performed, on two occasions, before small, but appreciative audiences, with actors: Angie Etwell and Ray Tunnicliffe enthusiastically bringing to life the events of so many years ago.

Since this event was such a rare and special occasion, I include the script for all to read.

Church Anniversary One Act play

A NEW CHURCH IN GUISBOROUGH - 1798

Characters in order of appearance:

Rev William Norris, Protestant Dissenter Evangelist from London. Mrs Elizabeth Dunn, rich widow of Guisborough.

Scene: *The entrance hall of an inn, in Guisborough, prior to a court quarter session on Tuesday, 19th. February, 1799.*

(Enter the Reverend William Norris stamping his feet to remove snow from his boots. Looks around.)

WN. Mrs Dunn you where are you? *(Goes to the hall door opens it and goes inside.)*

(Enter Mrs Dunn brushing snow from her coat. She looks around.)

ED. No Mr Norris. Oh dear, what to do? What to do?

WN. *(Rev Norris suddenly enters the room)*

Greetings, Mrs Dunn, you're here! In person as promised.

ED Of course, Mr Norris, surely you could never had doubted me? Just a short trudge along Westgate and I'm here. But for you a most remarkable journey through the snow from Osmotherley. Your arrival here, before me, can only described as a triumph!

WN And all attributed to the horse you so kindly loaned me so many months ago.

ED Ah, young Silas, a sturdy stallion.

WN From the moment he gained the sense of the direction of travel he moved forward most strongly and, at times, at a canter - and needed little guidance from me.

ED That was because he had a clear goal - to meet up with a young filly, in my stables, to which he has formed a most touching attachment.

WN And not yet spring!

ED Yes, indeed, but they can be united later. Tell me, Mr Norris, why your continued residency in Osmotherley with your associate, the Rev. Tyerman, when you could take up rooms here in Guisborough, the ancient capital of Cleveland?

WN That 'far away' village, you speak of, is well located for my evangelical campaign as I preach in so many locations from Darlington in the west to Whitby in the east.

ED Ah, your exploits in Cleveland have created great interest and some

well-earned admiration from amongst the local populous.

WN My thanks for your most kind observation.

ED Such an arduous task preaching to all and sundry. I watched you from afar as you spoke, at the market cross, to a large crowd of farmers, labourers, tradesmen and others - strangers to Guisborough. They were spellbound by your oratory. Tell me what inspired you to take up such a calling?

WN An advertisement in the Evangelical Magazine.

ED An advertisement! So you had no direct call from God.

WN Oh but yes, for God moves in mysterious ways...

EDhis wonders to perform.....

WNhe puts his footsteps in the sea...,

ED/WN (*together*) and rides upon the storm. Ha, ha, ha!

ED Such a wonderful duet from the hymn writer, William Cowper.....

WN May be - but we must not get carried away by romantic notions - for today we are here on the serious business of establishing a new Protestant Dissenting Church in Guisborough.

ED Indeed we are. But please tell me about this most curious advertisement?

WN My presence here is solely attributable to the concerns and efforts of my associate, Daniel Tyerman.

ED The man in whose house you reside in 'far away' Osmotherley?

WN The same. Some years ago, he had an occasion to go on a preaching tour of this area of Cleveland as part of his training to become a minister of religion. This experience left him somewhat distressed at the poor level of religious observance in the towns and villages as he presented his message of the Gospel to the various public gatherings.

ED So he thought that we were heathens!

WN No, not exactly. In fact, he took action and reported his concerns to the Evangelical Society of London and so the advertisement appeared: *Required by the Society an Evangelist to revive religious observance in the area of Cleveland in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Stipend: two guineas a month.*

ED So here you are, Mr Norris, at two guineas a month.

WN I arrived in Cleveland in October, 1796. In my first year I toured the area and preached a total

of 450 sermons, for which I received an additional bonus of £5.

ED A handsome sum and a just reward for such a tireless effort. In fact, a huge number of homilies to deliver to the local populations. Tell me, in total confidence, seeing as you visited so many widely spread locations, was it really 450 sermons or, perhaps, one sermon 450 times?

WN Absolutely not, madam! Be assured that on each occasion I reflected carefully on a biblical text, best suited to the gathered crowd, and so the Holy Spirit allowed me to speak clearly - the best words in the best order.

ED Poetically so to speak. Oh, I do apologise, sir. But it was my most wicked sense of humour spontaneously blurting out. I will be mortified if I have caused you some serious offence.

WN A healthy response, madam, to my rather boastful claims. Humility needs to be my resolution for the day.

ED And a readiness to join in a merry jest.

WN Of course.

ED But to the present business of the petition.

WN Yes, I have it here: (*Reads from a paper*) "We whose names are here unto, subscribe to you hereby to

unitedly and humbly request a licence for a house or building situated in a yard belonging to Elizabeth Dunn situated on the north side of the street called Westgate in the town of Guisborough in the North Riding of Yorkshire, which the aforesaid house or building as designed for the use of public worship of Almighty God according to the common mode and sentiments of Protestant

Dissenters called Calvinist - This day, Tuesday, 19th, February, 1799."
....

ED Tell me, the signatories to this petition, who are they?

WN Ah, yes....They are as follows: Ralph Medd,

ED Oh! „(*slight pause*) Ralph is my husband ‘s name – and now gone onto higher service with the Lord.

WN So sad that you must now continue life alone without a close companion.

ED I am not alone, for I have friends in abundance - and fond memories, also, of our wedding day: "*Mr Ralph Dunn is to marry Miss Elizabeth Husband in St Nicholas Parish Church Guisborough.*"

WN Fond memories, indeed, and a source of great comfort. Then we have James Scott,

ED Mr Scott, the schoolmaster, who keeps his pupils so well-behaved with his tight rein in the classroom.

WN ...And helps me in his role as a lay preacher during my absence, spreading the good news of the Gospel to those *'heathens'* you mentioned earlier.

ED Mr Scott is the most the most erudite of men and so clear in his exposition of scripture. His message to the fellowship is always pertinent to the present - and on occasions quite inspiring. He makes me reflect on his words - and so then to take up the claims of these times as being: 'The Age of Reason' - and so think!

WN William Walker, who, as you know, is master of the hunt and a very influential man in the town.

ED I rode to hounds as a gel, but at 61 years of age I am no longer able to ride side-saddle so I limit my participation to the stirrup cup with a hearty brandy to cheer them on their way.

WN James Marshall,

ED Really! His wife, Elizabeth, is a close friend of mine. She's so loves to follow the fashion and so do I. We are off to York

together, in the spring, to find what is the latest mode that we may purchase.

WN Daniel Smith, the weaver.

ED Yes, such an industrious man plying his trade making sailcloth for the fisher folk of that little hamlet of Saltburn.

WN Saltburn, also hosting the smugglers of the Ship Inn. It is rumoured that, that the resident boat builder makes cutters faster than the boats of the government revenue men - and so they are able to, well erm.....

EDSay no more, sir, say no more! I see that John Dickinson is one of the signatories. As a carter he is often employed by my agent on diverse transport duties

WN Tomorrow he is faced with the Herculean task of taking his largest wagon and best team of horses to transport goods to London - and including a letter to deliver, for me to the Evangelical Society. Kindly delivering without charge so saving the cost of the Post Boys.

ED. Perhaps, he could do the same for me?

WN Perhaps.....John Dale.

ED Ah, he's the man who always arrives late for worship. Sidles in at the back of the room after the Call to worship or even the first hymn. Such a wit you know. On one occasion I glared at him in disapproval and his response was to

say: "I know that I am late, madam, but observe how early I leave."

ED/WN (*Together*) Ha, ha, ha....

WN Tell me - about the wording of the petition - what do you think? Not too obsequious, I hope.

ED No. Perfect, simply perfect. You have a way with words, sir. And the signatories, are they all present in the' court room.

WN They are - but no judge. Delayed by the snow, no doubt.

ED Oh dear, we don't want a three month's delay.

WN There'll be no delay I'll warrant you. And now I must give the heartfelt thanks of this new fellowship in Christ to you for so generously providing a meeting house, for our worship, to be built in your yard.

ED I need no thanks for serving the Lord. As for my generosity, I think that should be more fairly attributed to my late husband's fortune.

WN There is no need for such modesty. Such a gift is

EDSay no more - shush!

WN Tell me, do you know of the presiding judge's religious affiliations?

ED Church of England. High church, very high church.

WN So almost a Papist?

EN Yes.

WN Oh dear, this could create a difficulty with a petition diametrically opposed to his view of how we worship the Lord.

ED Yes, this could indeed be the case as he has been known to express strong views about Dissenters, those opposing the book of common prayer and the creeds as laid out by the bishops.

WN The wrong judge is a misfortune I had not anticipated and is such bad luck.

ED Fear not, for all is not lost, sir. I have had an occasional acquaintance, which I may have been able to use to an advantage.

WN An advantage, you say?

ED Indeed!

WN But surely, it's illegal to influence a judge?

ED Oh no, I'd do no such thing. Now, whilst I deplore base flattery, a little praise in the correct mode can, in a moment, change a person's view of the world.

WN That appears to me like the base flattery that you so eschew.

ED Not at all. Flattery is when you express admiration for the attributes, achievements or virtues that a person believes that they have, whereas praise is for the virtues of which they

are totally unaware. As for the latter, I laid it on thickly as would be done with mortar and a trowel.

WN So favourably disposed, you would say?

ED Without doubt.

WN You're a devilish clever, Mrs Dunn.

ED Perhaps, but whilst we may be set fair on legal matters, I have long noticed a most singular absence in your life, Mr Norris.

WN I'm intrigued. Do tell.

ED You're in want of a wife!

WN A wife! On no! The Lord has first call on my time and labours to spread the Gospel here in Cleveland. And at two guineas a month how could I afford a wife?

ED Any competent woman could easily manage. A good woman for a good man, what could be better complimenting your good sense and sagacity with a warm heart, humble demeanour and most polite and engaging in conversation - and then you would have the comfort of a loving companion - there to help, support and advise in the trials of life.

WN And where would I find this paragon of virtue?

ED Here in Guisborough and further abroad in the area. There are

fair maids aplenty in Cleveland and others

ED Fair maids and others?

ED Be assured, Mr Norris, there are always others.

WN Ah, yesI think I heard the sound of a coach approaching. It may be the judge - I must go and see! (*Rushes to the front door*)

ED and leave me here! A gentleman would never abandon a lady on just such a whim.

WN I'll just be a moment and how do you know that I'm a gentleman?

ED Oh fie, sir! Humph!

WN (*WN returns immediately*) As I thought, it is the judge just alighting from his coach. We must go now into the courtroom.

ED Be assured, Mr Norris, the petition will be approved and then you can join me for dinner in celebration.

WN My apologies but there will no time to accept such an invitation as I must return to Osmotherley before nightfall.

ED Nonsense - it can't be done. The roads will be blocked by drifting snow. I insist that you stay for the night in my house. I'll not take no for an answer!

WN Thank you - you're so kind Mrs Dunn. And at dinner we may celebrate the building of a new meeting house and then talk of er.....other things.....

ED Things of mutual interest, William. As for the present - to the court room.
(Exit to the court room.)

Local Historical Note Rev William Norris, Evangelist. The license to build a meeting house for the Protestant Dissenters was approved, built and opened in October 1799. William Norris served as evangelist until 1802 when he left the area to take up a pastorate in the Yorkshire Dales. He died in the 1840's.

James Scott, the schoolmaster, served as pastor until the arrival of the first full minister William Hinners in 1805. The meeting house served the congregation until 1811, when the increase in the fellowship required a larger church. The present building was opened on Thursday, the 31st of October of that year.

Mrs Elizabeth Dunn. Mrs Dunn continued to live in Guisborough and was able to help the new minister, William Hinners, to finance and build the present Church. She never remarried, but was able to see William Hinners marry Ann Barry, a shoemaker's daughter, in St Nicholas' Church in November 1813. Elizabeth died on the 3rd, June, 1815, aged 77, and is buried in the churchyard.

Mrs Dunn is absent from the archive record of St Nicholas' tombstones – and as there is no burial plan for the churchyard the location of her grave is lost. Her final resting place is known only to God.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all

Ray Tunnicliffe

	Welcome/door	Vestry/notices	Communion server
3rd Dec	Jenny	Ray	Jenny
10th Dec	Darren	Jenny	
17th Dec	Martin	Peter	
24th Dec	Sandra	Martin	
25 th Dec	Joyce	Maureen	
7th Jan	Peter	Joyce	
14th Jan	Ray	Jenny	
21st Jan	Jenny	Ray	
28th Jan	Darren	Martin	

St Andrew's

Toy Service

Our Annual Toy Service will form part of our parade service on Sunday 10th December. New toys will be gratefully received at this service for distribution to Children in need in the Middlesbrough area.

Thank you.

Carols in the Car Park

**Tuesday 19th December
7.00pm**

Come and join us in singing carols in the car park of St. Andrew's URC.

Tea/Coffee and mince pies to follow .

Coffee for Charity

22nd October	Mind	£26.00
29th October	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£24.20
5th November	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£40.00

St Andrew's Calendar

Weekly/Monthly

Boy's Brigade

Details available from church elders.



Preachers

	Marton	Guisborough	Redcar
	10.00am	10.00am	10.30am
3-Dec	Jan Harper Meeting	Donna Moore Communion	Redcar Baptist
10-Dec	Ian Smith Toy Service	Donna Moore	Redcar Baptist
17-Dec	Maranny Jones Communion	Brian Stephenson	Redcar Baptist
24-Dec	Jane Tomlin Lesson&carol	Donna Moore	Redcar Baptist
25-Dec	No Service	Donna Moore All welcome 10.00am	
31-Dec	Jan Harper	No Service	Redcar Baptist
7-Jan	tba	Donna Moore	Redcar Baptist
14-Jan	Dave Elliott Parade	tba	Redcar Baptist
21-Jan	Jan Harper Communion	tba	Redcar Baptist
28-Jan	tba	tba	Redcar Baptist

Material for the February Magazine to church editors by Sunday 14th
January please

Group Editor – R Wheeler, 2C Gypsy Lane, Nunthorpe,
Middlesbrough, TS7 0DX.

Telephone: 01642 300546.

Email: roger.wheeler5@virginmedia.com