

# *Group News*



## *December \* 2024-5 \* January*

The monthly magazine for:

**Guisborough URC**

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**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](http://www.urch-northernsynod.org.uk)

[www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk](http://www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk)

# Pastoral Letter

November is a time of remembrance, not only Remembrance Sunday but also the last Sunday before Advent is when many churches remember those of their family who have died during the church year. November also is getting close to New Year when many of us look back not just on one year, but on many years and we remember!

As I listened again to one of the readings I had chosen for last Sunday, it suddenly struck me that in this time of chaos in the world and uncertainty in the Church it would be good, to print it out and have it on a kitchen worktop, beside our beds, on our desk (if we have one) or at the front or back door. In my own lifetime I have never needed this reassurance so much as now. It is, Romans 8: v35-39,

*<sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."<sup>37</sup>[No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

In Cleveland Pastorate, the uncertainty might continue BUT we give thanks that we know each other so much better than we did at the beginning of the process, we share in each other's joys and we grieve with each other when we lose a dearly loved member of our church family. We are not alone and as we approach Christmas, with the joy of the baby born in Bethlehem, we remember Easter and the baby, now grown into a man's sacrifice to make us one family united by the love of God the Father. God gives us choices, do we stay positive or remain negative as to the future of the Church worldwide, the future of the URC nationally, locally or right here in Cleveland Pastorate.

As your Interim Moderator, I give thanks for being accepted as part of an extended Church Family. I am certainly not negative, occasionally maybe I might feel a bit down but with the words of Romans ringing in my ears, how can I, and you, not put negativity aside and look to the future positively.

*“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

May everyone have a peaceful, joyous and blessed Christmas.

With love

Maranny

## *Synod Prayers*

### **1st December**

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

### **8th December**

Human Rights Day (10<sup>th</sup>).

### **15th December**

Churches: Guisborough; St Andrew's, Nunthorpe and Marton; Redcar; St Columba's, Billingham; St Andrew's Mission, Thornaby; Stockton-on-Tees; St George's, Hartlepool.

### **22nd December**

Northumbrian Industrial Mission: Fiona Usher. Salvation Army North East Division: Divisional Commanders: Majors David & Gillian Burns. Baptist Northern Association: Regional Ministers: Revd Linda Donaldson and Revd Johnny Pozzo.

### **29th December**

Looking to 2025 with a renewed sense of hope.

# *Northern Synod*

## **Report on Northern Synod 12/10/24**

Our theme this Autumn was Flourishing Church and Community. Opening worship was led by the Youth Opportunities Team with Scripture passages about important young people in the story of the Bible.

We said goodbye to Rev. Tony Haws and Rev. Norma Johnson. We welcomed new ministers including Rev. Kay Blackwell to the St Cuthbert Centre on Lindisfarne. It might be a good time to think of a group trip for a day of refreshment and renewal.

The Rev. Andy Lie retired from his post in Ecumenism and Interfaith Dialogue. He shared some reflections with us. He spent time as an observer in Palestine. This is the only way I would ever visit the Holy Land.

Our Youth Opportunities Team and pioneer workers talked to us about ideas for engaging with our communities. Simple ideas that can make a big difference.

We had an excellent discussion on how to engage teenagers in Worship and our churches more generally.

After a reminder about Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment we heard about Synod on Tour. Rev Kim Plumpton and Trevor Jamison are going on tour over the next 2 years to listen to our concerns and provide advice and support. Other Synod members may travel with them. Our first date is Hartlepool 31st May 2025 and there will also be one in Darlington in 2026.

Lucy Cooke is available to preach and encourage us in Faithful Flourishing whether through Stepwise or other study days. Tiny Grants are available for Community Work or a Retreat (perhaps to Holy Island).

In the afternoon we talked about Mission to people on the Margins. This theme came from General Assembly in July. If you have a heart for Mission/ Discipleship Rev. Sally Bateman or Lucy Cooke would like to hear from you for work on the Mission and Discipleship Committee. There are many opportunities for us to work with those on the margins of our society. We just

need to listen out for who is in need. Start something and others will come to join us or to take over.

We need to find uses for our buildings before they close so they belong to the community. We can work with other organisations. We don't have to do it all ourselves or reinvent the wheel.

Synod agreed to aim for Net Zero by 2040 despite concerns from The Trust about financial implications. We are all urged to register as an Eco Church and make progress as we can.

Our friend Peter Etwell was thanked for his long service on Pastoral Committee and allowed to retire at last.

I left before closing worship as I had a little dog to get back to. I was also performing in a concert that evening with Guisborough Choral Society so I had a very busy day.

We meet again in March. If you would like to come please contact me. I find the meetings are always interesting and thought provoking and the boring bits are over very quickly. There is often very good food as well.

*Donna Moore.*

## Guisborough

The Christmas season always reminds me of many years ago I was involved with National Church Action on Poverty who set up about 30 Poverty Hearings around the country for people in Poverty to have **centre stage** to tell their stories in front of local church leaders, politicians and business leaders. These accumulated into an 800 delegate National Poverty Hearing in Church House in London in front of *national* church leaders, politicians and business leaders. I spoke at the Middlesbrough and London hearing.

I'll always remember that two speakers in particular profoundly stood out to me. The first when I listened to a young homeless girl in Middlesbrough who told us all that **she lived in a bin shed**. At the London Poverty Hearing I listened to, among others, a young single mother telling her story. **I was so moved by her story** that I made her story into a poem.

Ever since, I've always sang this poem to myself every Christmas to the tune of **AWAY IN A MANGER**. I would like to invite any of you to sing **TODAY IN A BEDSIT** too. To remind us all, that **Christmas is a demand for today's Love in Action**. It's reminding us all how some children's birth circumstances, both at home and abroad, are closely aligned to the birth of another innocent, vulnerable baby, Jesus the Christ.

## **TODAY IN A BEDSIT.**

**Sang to the tune of Away in a Manger**

Today in a bedsit,  
A drawyer for a bed  
A tiny little baby  
lays down his sweet head  
A-bare bulb on the ceiling  
shines down where he lay  
cockroaches are creeping  
and Rats stay at bay'  
Bare floor boards are creaking  
The baby awakes  
His mother stops weeping  
No crying he makes.

The lecky meter's empty  
It's damp and its cold.  
Other people with plenty  
don't care much, she's told.  
Forgive us *all* children  
If-we tend not to care  
Jesus, turn our hearts to them  
to comfort them there.

*Linda Granville*

After writing this article the American Presidential election has just taken place.

My heart goes out to the children who may be affected by the results of that election and I've just been moved to write this other poem

## **Guisborough Calendar**

### **Weekly**

Thursdays 9.30am – 11.30am Market Day Coffee Morning  
10.30am Church open for Private Prayer  
11.30am Quiet Time in Church for Prayers and Reflections.

## TODAY IN A WAR ZONE

**sang to the tune of away in a manger**

Today in a war zone  
No house or a bed  
Children scared and alone  
Lay down their sweet head.  
The children of Gaza  
look up to the sky  
bombs rain down upon them  
starvation reigns high.  
The children of Ukraine  
are suffering too  
With far too much pain  
any child should endure.

Dear children forgive us.  
Break our apathy  
We feel oh so helpless  
But-your heart cries in me  
Jesus,- hold your dear children  
in thy tender care  
and turn our hearts to them  
to comfort them there.

*Linda Granville*

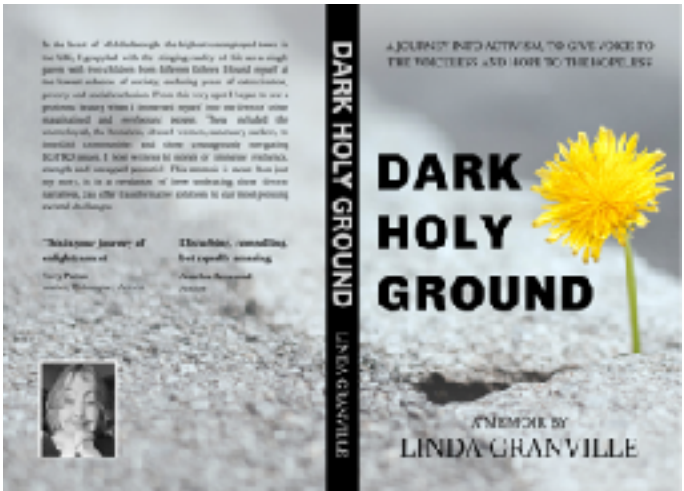
With the recent far right racial riots across the UK and the results of the recent American election, today the world seems to be crucifying itself. But we Christians carry with us the comforting basic Christian belief of Resurrection. Resurrection is not getting down from the cross putting tiny plasters on our wounds, going back to the spot that put us there in the first place, it's about sticking with the cross, hanging where the two opposites intersect, learning from each and then going beyond it into a new and loving all inclusive compassionate way of being.

This wonderful season of Christmas, gifts us all with that wonderful bright light of the Christ Child permeating all our hearts, through the darkest of darkness. It's encouraging us all to feel and connect to that same Christ light **always** residing deep within each one of us giving opportunity to find our own unique gifts to shine the light of that helpless vulnerable baby to shine even brighter. Along side yours, my personal gift to offer is to promote my book (DARK HOLY GROUND A journey into Activism to give Voice to the Voiceless and Hope to the Hopeless. ) It's a minor miracle that after 5 years of hard work self publishing this book with technical help from a friend in America over zoom, very timely, just recently the Audio, paperback and kindle version have FINALLY come together and are now up and running to buy on Amazon.

I want all people to afford to read the Economic and Social Justice issues I write about in my memoir to counteract the far right racial rhetoric that promotes doom and gloom today. So **if anybody can't afford to buy any of the three versions please email me on lindagranville70@gmail.com or phone me 07951062609 and I'll be happy to send you a free pdf copy of DARK HOLY GROUND for you to read or download and print out** . I don't want this book to lie on a shelf but I want each chapter to be a LIVING document for people to find some clues for action by immersing themselves through my book into the lives of the homeless, the unemployed ,sanctuary seekers, young people , debt issues, people of different faiths and those with domestic violence issues and those navigating LGTBQ + issues, not forgetting navigating through today's high cost of today's living crisis. DARK HOLY GROUND gives clues to bring people different to each other together to eliminate Division and Hate and instead promotes Connection and Love for 'The Other'. Contributing to and sharing each others Christ light personal gifts, large or small, encourages us all to shine collectively even more brightly toward a more just and compassionate world that works for ALL. The pages of my memoir are simply based on my life time daily question ,, What would Jesus do?" I suspect there will be disagreement by some of things I've written, but that's perfectly OK because at least it invites a catalyst for discussion.

*Linda Granville*

*www.Linda-Granville.com email lindagranville70@gmail.com 07951062609*





	<b>Vestry</b>	<b>Door</b>
1st Dec	Ray	Darren
8th Dec	Jenny	Martin
15th Dec	Martin	Sandra
22nd Dec	Peter	Joyce
25th Dec	Joyce	Peter
29th Dec	Ray	Jenny

## *Redcar*

It continues to be a huge blessing to see the Church full on a Sunday morning. The Sunday schools continue to grow and in November a third group was formed to cater for children and young people over the age of 11.

Some sound deadening panels have been installed in the lower hall to try to make conversation a little easier, the acoustics were always dreadful. Other measures are in the pipeline....

A meeting with the Moderator, Kim and other members from Synod is to take place at the end of November to discuss formalising our partnership with the Baptist church and becoming an LEP.

A reminder that all are welcome to a RURC led reflective service on the second Thursday of each month in Station Road. It is a short service followed by a cuppa and chat! The next services are on 12th December and 9th January at 11am.

*Elaine*

# St Andrew's

## Soup Lunch

The Soup Lunch on Sat. 9th November Raised £115.00 for the Rosemary Fund. Many thanks to those who supported and to those who helped.

## Toy Service

Our Toy Service is on December 8th. We would be grateful for donations of unwrapped new toys which will be taken by the Charity on the day. Thank you.

## Carols in the Car Park

Carols in the Car Park is on Thursday 19th December at 7.00p.m. This will be followed by Tea/Coffee and mince pies.

Please do come along.

## What has been going on?

The Church Garden surrounds the church on three sides. It is mostly grass which is mowed regularly by the Council, six flower and shrub beds at the back, the L shaped bed along the path going as far as the wire fence where the roof is at its lowest, and the small bed in the Car park where the BB planted a Sorbus Tree. There is also a long hedge against the kitchen window.. Everything was *massively* overgrown and it was increasingly difficult to get the mower between the beds.

There is something very therapeutic about cutting down which a group of us started to do in August, imagining that four Friday mornings would be enough to deal with many Roses 12ft. tall, snowberry, cotoneaster, hawthorn, brambles and much more, entangled for many years. There was even a self-set sycamore tree in one bed! The large leaves on the ivy which was climbing over the fence was the first job and took a full morning.

The main problem was how to get rid of what we had cut down! It will rot eventually but the twiggy piles at the back of the beds will remain for the time being. Roger shredded at least half of it which speeds up the breaking down into compost.

After having worked for 12 weeks we now have the beginnings of a flower bed to the right of the main door. There are forget-me-knots, pulmonaria, crocosmia, golden rod already in and hardy geraniums to come. There are also bulbs to go in. The BB have accepted the challenge to clear the tree bed of the euphorbia, install a proper edging against the car park and hopefully plant up the bed. There is a new pot ready with a golden conifer to replace the one which died.

It will be interesting to see how the shrubs in the beds at the back recover and how the roses will have benefitted from the most radical pruning they have had for many years.

The group has now been 'stood down' until the Spring.

Thank you to: Roger, Peter, Julie, Shirley, Jan, Grace, David and Eleanor and the BB

*Jane*

### **Coffee for Charity**

6th Oct.	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£41.45
20th Oct.	Rosemary Fund.	£28.45
27th Oct.	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£19.40
3rd Nov.	Mind	£25.00
10th Nov.	Boys' Brigade	£26.30

## **St Andrew's Calendar**

### **Weekly/Monthly**

Boy's Brigade

Details available from church elders.

# *Preachers*

	<b>Marion</b>	<b>Guisborough</b>	<b>Redcar</b>
	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>11.00am</b>
1-Dec	Jan Harper Meeting	Donna Moore Communion	Redcar Baptist
8-Dec	Dave Elliott Parade	Jan Harper	Redcar Baptist
15-Dec	Jan Harper Communion	Bill Reynolds	Redcar Baptist
22-Dec	Jan Harper	Donna Moore	Redcar Baptist
25 Dec		Donna Moore 10.00am All welcome	
29-Dec	Jan Harper	Donna Moore	Redcar Baptist

January preachers to be announced in due course.

Material for the February Magazine to church editors by Sunday 12th  
January please

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