

Group News



**** 2022 * April * 2022 ****

The monthly magazine for:

Guisborough URC

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Part of the URC Northern Synod – www.urc-northernynod.org.uk

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Pastoral Letter

'Anyone who follows me shall never walk in darkness but shall have the light of life'

John 8.v. 12

'Don't do that!', 'Stop it', 'Leave it alone'. There are times when being a parent feels as if we're constantly nagging, forever saying no. The same, sadly, is the impression some people have of the Church; a view reinforced by those old wayside pulpit posters you can still sometimes see, starkly proclaiming 'The wages of sin is death' or some other equally cheery message. Undeniably, there is a negative element in the Bible, especially in the majority of the Ten Commandments with their stern message, 'Thou shalt not...'

This, however, is by no means the whole story, for in the teachings of Jesus the message is reversed. Instead of 'You shall not...' it becomes 'You shall...' all the negative commandments being summed up in one positive, 'A new commandment I give you. Love one another.' Repeatedly, it's the same story, - 'you *shall* have', 'you *shall* know', you *shall* find'. The blind *shall* see, the lame *shall* walk, the imprisoned *shall* be set free, the pure in heart *shall* see God, the hungry and thirsty *shall* be satisfied and so on.

We must never think that being a Christian is about what we *can't* do, still less should we give others that impression. Above all it's about what we *can* do, about the possibilities the love of Christ opens up, about the sheer potential of life.

As we approach the magical time of Easter, let us try and make our Christian life a sign to all those we meet that Christianity is a joyful and positive way of living.

Blessings and Shalom

Jan



Synod Prayers

3 April:

St George's URC, High Heaton; St Cuthbert's LEP (Methodist/URC), Heaton; Revd Dr Grant Wilson.

10 April:

St Mark's URC, Amble; Revd Alison Mills.

17 April: Easter Sunday:

The work of Children's & Youth Work Committee and Convenor, Mr Sandy Ogilvie and Synod Children's Work Advisor, Mrs Hannah Middleton, and Synod Youth Advisor, Mr John Stephenson. Our Youth Pioneer workers, Angela Feather and Esther Bailey.

24 April:

PCM, ministers in training at Ricatla Ecumenical Seminary. The RC Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, the Rt Revd Robert Byrne.

St Andrew's

Congratulations to...

Natalie (Winner) and Adam on the occasion of their engagement. We wish them a happy future and send them our very best wishes.

Advance Notice

A coffee morning to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee to be held at St. Andrew's on Saturday 2nd July at 10.30am.

Details to follow.

Coffee for Charity

20th Feb.	Rosemary Fund	£24.20
27th Feb.	Sick Childrens Trust.	£25.00
6th Mar.	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£20.40
13th Mar.	Boys Brigade	£22.83

St Andrew's Calendar

Weekly/Monthly

Boy's Brigade

Details available from church elders.

Guisborough

The United Reformed Church in 2021 began a Church Life Review considering how the denomination needs to change in order to rise to the challenges facing us in the 21st-century. The Church Life Review Group made its first report to the Assembly Executive in November. Dr John Bradbury, the URC General Secretary, in presenting the report, set it in the context of the history of God's people and set in our own moment in time.

In his address to the Assembly Executive, published in the URC's magazine Reform, Dr Bradbury pointed to the Church in Western Europe facing the most significant upheaval since the Reformation. It is a world where only a residual memory of Orthodox Christian faith remains. A world where our identity no longer comes so obviously from the social groups to which we belong. A world in which we are more globally interconnected than ever before - presenting different views of different situations - new ideas and many more options for personal activities than in the past. This great cultural shift has, therefore, had a great impact on the life and effectiveness of the church, reducing-significantly its influence within the community.

The Church Life Report is a response to the problems we face today in order to find a way forward for our church in the 21st century. In his address the general secretary made several general important observations. In the first he stated unequivocally that:-

"I believe God is calling us professional life together as a church in radical ways."

For this to happen we will be called to be disciples in this moment in history, in this corner of the globe - a tremendous challenge. It is also a tremendous opportunity, very difficult but it's a vocation to be a covenant people of God worshipping witnessing serving and evangelising here and now.

In order to meet this challenge we must not allow our present way of organising our church fellowships to hold us back. In times past when renewals, revivals have happened it has begun within the ‘treasure’ we hold in the Scriptures. Going back to these, with fresh minds, there is often to be found something that we’ve never heard of before - something differently, spiritual giving us a new strength to find radical ways forward for Christ.

The call is to be that faithful people - not clinging onto what we have been.. Not attempting to maintain a culture that must pass, but accepting God’s challenge to be open to new ideas and a new way forward.

Another observation made about the report was that:-

“Resurrection is not found in Grand Schemes.”

The idea is put forward that there is a danger we may expect some ‘grand schemes or vision’ to take us forward. Yet in the past, looking back at the history of the church, and of Israel, we find that most renewals come not from visions but from a rather mundane returning to roots. Josiah had the lost scrolls from the Temple read and renewal followed. Luther read his Bible and found things there that were revolutionary.

At the heart of this idea is that the ‘green shoots of new resurrection life of the church’ are to be found not in grand schemes or plans but in communities and networks of people getting on with the call to be a church where they are. So in the practical active living out the Gospel is where ‘New Life and green shoots’ are to be found. As a church the best we can do is to attend these green shoots and allow them to flourish.

It is also time to name some difficult realities learning from which goes well and a time to face firmly at what is difficult. It is obviously easier to name the issues that are difficult, rather than solving them. A faithful response is to face problems with bravery. We are running out of people. Local churches struggle to find leadership and ministers take on many of those responsibilities, usually done by elders or members - along with oversight of three, four, five, six or more churches. It is a broken system - and not sustainable. Soon the church will be in the position of having seven churches per stipendiary minister.

This being the case the Church Life Review Group is taking the first steps to enable us constructively and intention to:-

“work out how we live faithfully here and now.”

To find where the answers lie, it is clear that we need to think much more carefully about our stewardship of resources, particularly our financial resources, than we have ever done in the past. Since the formation of the URC Synod's have grown from being a moderator with a typist to a place where a larger staff have to deal with problems that can't be resolved at local church level. This now means that we don't have a clear overview what needs to be done and whether and how things get done, or how we pay to get them done.

There is a need to know what resources we have, as a family of the URC, and how they are currently allocated, before we step back and ask whether this is how we want them to be used. Only then will we be able to see where there are possibilities to support 'green shoots of new life.' When this becomes clear effective support can be given to faithfully worshipping fellowships and communities who struggle under the burden of even greater compliance and even fewer people to respond to the task.

To be specific about future action the General Secretary made to following observation:

“Our hope is that, a little further down the line, concrete proposals for new ways of working, and also new pieces of work - new communities, new forms of evangelism will emerge.”

So what does all of this mean for local fellowships? The references to the 'Green shoots of new life' suggests a movement where most inspiration for revival comes from the 'grass roots' upwards, rather than from the 'top down.'

The 'top' will provide some ideas with practical, focussed financial support. But to work it be will need to be a true, faithful partnership where ideas are shared not only between the grassroots and the top, but also across fellowships far and wide, throughout the country. This means that, here in Cleveland, our fellowships will need to find our "Green shoots of new life" nurture them and pass them on to others. Question is: will we find this a daunting prospect or a real exciting opportunity? We must hope that it is the latter.

Ray Tunnicliffe.

Note:- The full report of the Church Life Review Group can be downloaded from:- urcarchive.org.uk/november-2021.html

	Welcome/door	Vestry/notices	Communion
3 April	Barbara	Peter	
10 April	Darren	Maureen	
17 April	Ray	Joyce	Jenny
24 April			
1 May	Sandra	Ray	

Redcar

Pop In

Andy felt well enough on the 10th March to open up the Pop in and managed to let a few people know about it. He hopes to keep this going but it will obviously depend on how he is feeling and if he gets enough help. It is something I know a lot of the regulars have missed since the last one in March 2020.

Easter Fayre

We are hoping to host an Easter Fayre on Saturday 16th April. Dot McSherry is organising it and it will run from 10.30 to 1.30. Usual stalls but no raffle this time.



Redcar Calendar

Weekly

Thursday

9.30am Prayers

10.00-11.30 Pop in Centre

Preachers

Marion	Guisborough	Redcar
10.00am	10.00am	11.00am
3-Apr Maranny Jones	Ray Anglesea	Brian Stephenson
10-Apr K & M Harris	Bill Reynolds	Jan Harper
Easter Jan Harper Communion	Norma Johnson Communion	Joint Service Redcar Baptist 10.30am
24-Apr tba	Brian Stephenson	Jane Rowell
1-May Donna Moore	Jane Rowell	K & M Harris Communion

Material for the May Magazine to church editors by Sunday 10th April
please

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