

Group News



** December 2014 **

** January 2015**

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

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Minister

Rev Catey Morrison, 2 Stanghow Road, Lingdale (01287 651926)

catey@eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Dear Friends,

This month I hand over the reigns for the front page muse to Susan Griffiths, a member and elder at our Lingdale Church. May her words about her recent experiences, which she feels so led to share with us all, lead to us to rethink what we are doing in the church this Christmas and how we want people to view the church. I wonder how things were in the stable that first Christmas, and who was welcome there as Jesus, the Christ-child, was given to the world, being born of Mary. The reality being that we are all welcome there still. So what do we need to learn from this and from what Susan has to share with us below? Please read on! Have a peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Revd Catey Morrison

All welcome! Or not as the case may be.

A few months ago I saw two social groups advertised in a local paper. One was church run and the other secular, but both were based around interests of mine, with monthly meetings about an hour long. I've long since given up on joining night classes but I thought this I could manage. I got the impression that neither group were long established so I hoped I would not feel too out of place, and the information did say "all welcome".

I went along to my first meetings and my experiences could not have been more different.

At the first group no-one noticed me walk in and I had to ask if I was in the right place. The reply was yes, so I asked if it was okay to join them. Another yes. And those were the only words spoken to me all evening. No-one was introduced and the assumption was that everyone knew everyone else and what was happening. I'm not sure anyone actually noticed when I left at the end!

At the second group I received a warm welcome on the door and

was pointed in the direction of the chairs and offered a hot drink. Introductions were made and a brief run down of how things worked was offered. My nearest neighbours chatted and at the end I was wished a good night and a “hope to see you next month”.

You can guess which group I have continued to attend and which I have not!

What sadden me most was that the less than welcoming group was the church run one. During the evening there was lots of talk about meeting together to worship God and talk about Him; about Jesus’ love for us and ours for him but there was little evidence of God’s love in the welcome I received, or rather did not receive. What worried me was how that would have affected me had I been at the beginning of my Christian journey, or maybe not even begun it properly but was just exploring Christianity? If I had gone along to that meeting to see what these Christian’s were about I’m not sure I would have bothered to find out anymore!

The experience made me think about the welcome we provide to newcomers to our Churches. If someone has been brave enough to step through our doors for the first time what sort of welcome do we give them? What evidence do we give of God’s love? Do they see us a part of an exclusive members only club, or as the living example of Jesus who welcomes all?

Christmas is a time when people who don’t “do” Church come to Church for the first time, or return after a long absence. I know that this Christmas I will be extra aware of those unfamiliar faces and try to give them the welcome that Jesus would give – inclusive not exclusive.

Susan Griffiths

FAF Club

The FAF Club next meets on Sunday 21st December at the manse in Lingdale, for young people aged 11+. All are welcome for Fun activities, Faith Sharing and Food! The young people will be tie-dying t-shirts this month, as well as digging deeper into Christmas.

For our Prayers

Synod Prayers

7 December - Ponteland; St John's, Wideopen; Revd Joan Ross.

14 December - Mission & Evangelism Group; Convenor Revd John Paul; Stamfordham LEP; Falstone & Kielder; Bellingham LEP; Wark LEP; Deacon Anne Taylor.

21 December - St John the Evangelist LEP, Kingston Park; Revd Roger Mills.

28 December - Christmas this week – PCM: All the Church's ministers – those working in parishes and engaged in the active ministry of the Church, or those retired, including appointed evangelists and youth workers; Northern Salvation Army Divisional Commanders Majors Darrell and Katrina Thomas.

Group Prayer Pointers

1st December - We pray that amongst this season of great festivity the true story of Christmas will be heard.

8th December- We pray for all those working to help those affected by the Ebola virus, as the virus continues to take so many lives in the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. We pray for enough resources and personnel to combat the virus and for peace to replace fear.

15th December- We pray for those feeling the cold housed in inadequate housing or with inadequate heating. We pray that there will be help and support for all in need, especially those who are housebound.

Our Prayers Continue

22nd December- We pray for those in our communities dreading Christmas right now, those who have not got enough food in their cupboards or any presents under their trees. We think of all those who feel they will be letting down their families at this time, due to their financial problems.

29th December- We pray for a fresh new start for all who need it as we approach the New Year, and a fresh start for ourselves as we move on from the challenges and issues of 2014 to the year 2015.

5th January - We pray for peace and calm and focus for the year ahead. We ask God to help us focus us on the issues which we should be concerned with and enable us to close the door on matters and activities that are not God's will or desire for us and our churches.

12th January - We continue to pray for all those working to help those affected by the Ebola virus, as the virus continues to take so many lives in the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. We pray for enough resources and personnel to combat the virus and for peace to replace fear.

19th January - We pray for our neighbours in the houses immediately around us. Pray for the families on your right and left, and all those in the houses you can see from your window. God show us where we need to act and who we need to encourage in faith.

26th January - We pray for the issues that we have seen on the news this week. God give us compassionate concern for those suffering around the world, and stir in us a desire to respond in prayer and in other ways.

Super Soup Fundraising Cookbook:

The Group Super Soup Cookbook is out now, crammed full of delicious recipes and yet for sale at the very reasonable price of three pounds!!! Grab yours now for excellent and simple soup recipes to warm the cockles of your heart and soul this winter. They make a great stocking filler. All proceeds from the sale of these cookbooks will go towards the Synod Appeal for funds for the Church in Mozambique. Soup books are available at all 4 churches, but if you need extra copies, or specifically want to order a few, then please speak to Catey.

Guisborough

I was out walking on Friday with a friend and her dog Molly when we stopped at the Stray Cafe for a coffee and something to eat. The special was a Bah Humbug! cake and I just had to try a slice. It was delicious dark chocolate and mint, but I really had to try it because I hate Christmas. I'm not really a Scrooge, I quite like the day itself. It's the long lead up I hate, the endless adverts and the pressure to buy ever more expensive presents for everyone you know, the pressure to buy food you don't need when the use by dates are well before Christmas itself. This, at the time of year

when the days are getting shorter, the weather colder and often wetter, and work even busier, with all the seasonal viruses which I seem to get given one after the other. I don't get much sympathy at home as Sean keeps singing "It's the most wonderful time of the year." I can only respond Bah Humbug!

At the moment I am waiting for a birth. I enjoy kitten cams on the internet which help me to relax by watching kittens play. I enjoy the heart warming stories of rescued cats and kittens, often abandoned by their owners, who find new homes with kind-hearted people who also look out

for each other. Dorothy, a one year old black cat, is pregnant and was thrown out by her people, but has found a safe foster home in which to have her kittens. This is the birth I am waiting for. It could be today or tomorrow. I will enjoy watching her kittens grow and seeing them find their forever homes, as will Dorothy herself once her mothering duties are over.

This is what Advent is all about, waiting for a birth. A birth that brings hope of a new relationship with God, a birth full of promise, a life to follow and a pattern for our lives, the birth of Jesus. The true message of Christmas is that God is with us and wants to share in our lives. We need to respond to that love by sharing it with everyone we meet. To celebrate Christmas we don't need lots of money to buy expensive presents or lots of food to eat ourselves sick. We just need to open our hearts to God and to each other and share whatever we have.

This time of year has always needed some celebration. The trials of winter are not new and go back more than just 2000 years. We all need cheering up

to carry us through to the lengthening days and the promise of new life with the Spring. This is why the church fathers in their wisdom put the Christmas celebration "in the deep midwinter." We can choose whether we join in with the consumerist competition, to spend the most money, or to be the most prepared for Christmas, but we risk losing the point. Surely it is better to put aside some time to relish the waiting, to spend time with those who need us and those whom we love, to relax and enjoy the day itself and to cele-

Guisborough Choral Society

Christmas Celebration

Saturday 13th December 7.30pm
Methodist Church, Westgate

Our Christmas concert this year there will include traditional and modern carols, together with Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, selections from Handel's *Messiah*, bible readings, and music from Guisborough Salvation Army Band.

Tickets £10, £8 concessions, £1 under-19s, from Guisborough Bookshop, Greensleeves Music, wegottickets.com, or on the door.

brate Christ coming into the world.

Whether you love all the Christmas Razzamatazz and preparations, or like me, you find it all too much and wish we could fast forward to the day itself, I hope and pray you have a peaceful and happy Christmas. When it is all over, and the January blues kick in, start looking for those lengthening days and those first

snowdrops pushing through. Look out for signs that Christ's coming has made a difference and that the world is a better place for his presence amongst us. Spring is just around the corner and love is the best Christmas gift of all. I am off now to see if Dorothy has had those kittens yet.

Donna Moore

Guisborough Calendar

Sun	7th December		Nativity Service for all the family, as we recall the Christmas Story together.
Tue	9 th Dec	7.15pm	Church Meeting
Wed	24 th Dec	2.30pm	Christmas Eve Service at Belmont View Care Home.
Sun	25th January	6.00pm	United Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Any changes to these dates will be announced in the Sunday Service. Please check.

Weekly

Thursdays	9.30am – 11.30am	Market Day Coffee Morning
Thursdays	11.30am	Quiet Time – prayers and reflections with Catey, Ken, Norma and others.

Guisborough Rotas

	Vestry	Communion	Door	Flowers
7th Dec	M Houston		D Houston	L Reeves
14th Dec	J Basham	P Etwell	M Ward	Ladies
21st Dec	J Reynolds		B Ward	Ladies
28th Dec	R Tunnicliffe		D Beattie	
4th Jan	D Moore	M Burrows	D Cross	
11th Jan	D Houston		M Houston	D Kane
18th Jan	B Ward		D Beattie	K Harris
25th Jan	D Cross		R Tunnicliffe	P Etwell
1st Feb	J Basham		M Ward	J Basham

Redcar

Annual Memorial Service

**Saturday 6th December
10.30am**

This is an opportunity to take time out to remember your loved one this Christmas time. Come and during worship light a candle and hang a star on the tree to assist your remembering. There will be opportunity afterwards to have a cup of tea or coffee in the hall or to have quiet space in the church.

The Annual Bazaar

A huge thank you to all who supported this event in any way: by donating, by helping or by visiting on Saturday, 8th November. Again it was a very busy event but one which had a wonderful atmosphere and was well attended. Many of the craftspeople commented on the fellowship they encountered. The Bazaar raised an amazing £725 for Church funds!! THANK YOU!

Redcar Calendar

Tue 2nd Dec Craft and Chatter – venue and time to be announced!

Mon 15th Dec 6.15pm Christingle Service with the Cubs, Scouts and Beavers. Join the children for a reminder of the real meaning of Christmas through our Christingle Service. Light refreshments to follow served by the Scouts.

Sun 21st Dec Nativity Service for all the family, as we recall the Christmas Story together.

Tue 6th Jan 2.00pm Craft and Chatter in the Church

Sun 11th Jan 12 noon New Year Soup and Sweet lunch after the service. Soup and rolls will be provided but please can everyone bring a contribution to the deserts.

Sunday 18th Jan 6.00pm United Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, at Christchurch, Coatham

Thu 22nd Jan 12 noon Prayers will be held at our church as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. There will be prayers held each day this week at a different church. See notice for details.

.Sunday 25th Jan United Covenant Service, between ourselves, Zetland Park Methodist Church and St. Peter's. Details of time and venue to be announced.

Weekly

Wednesdays 11.00am Singing Group

Thursday 9.30am Prayers

10.00-11.30am Pop-in Centre

2.00pm Thursday People at the home of Catherine Milburn.

Lingdale

Craft & Conversation

10th December
7th January
1.30pm – 3.30pm

New members welcome whether experienced crafters or beginners.

Flower Rota

7th Dec – Miss S Griffiths
14th Dec – Mrs J Coulthard
21st Dec – In Memory of J Winter
4th Jan - Mr B Dove
11th Jan – Mrs M Saunders
18th Jan – In Memory of
Miss J Scarth and Mrs B Waller
25th Jan – Mr Tony Waller

Christmas Coffee Morning

On Tuesday 16th December from 10-1pm there will be a Christmas Coffee Morning at the church with stalls, cakes, gingerbread lattes and a raffle. Drop in for some warming Christmas fellowship amidst the rush of Christmas.

Lingdale Calendar

Fri 19th Dec 10.00am Christingle Service with the children of Lingdale School. This year this service is to be held at the school.

Sun 21st Dec Nativity Service for all the family, as we recall the Christmas Story together

Weekly

Tuesday 9.30am – 10.30am Fat to Fit Club
10.30am – 1.00pm Community Café. Donations for the food bank can be dropped off at the Café

3rd Sunday of the month 6.30pm Fun and Faith Club in the Manse

Book Club

December's meeting will be held on 2nd December at 7.00pm when we will be discussing *A Song for Issy Bradley* by Carys Bray.

January's meeting is 6th January at 7.00pm – book to be decided.

New members welcome. Books are provided and we are a friendly group! It isn't an English lesson!

St Andrew's

Ladies' Fellowship

The Ladies' Fellowship had a lovely St Andrew's Lunch on Tuesday 18th November at the Mill, Stokesley.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 13th January 2015 1.30pm to 3.00pm at St. Andrew's.

Carols and Coffee

Carols and coffee with mince pies to be held at St Andrew's on Wednesday 10th December at 2.00pm with raffle. Donations to Christian Aid.

(Donations of mince pies and raffle prizes will be gratefully received)

Annual Bazaar

The Bazaar held on Saturday 15th November raised £415.14 for church funds. Many thanks everyone.

Shoe Box Appeal

Many thanks to everyone for their very generous donations to the Shoe Box Appeal. We sent 47 completed boxes to the collection centre. Well done everyone!!

Also thanks to Shona for her organisation with the help of Eleanor and Joan and Grant for taking the completed boxes to the collection point.

As we have now only two empty shoe boxes, which we have recently received, would everyone please give us any they acquire during the coming. Thank you.

Toy Service

The Toy Service will be held at St. Andrew's on Sunday 14th December. We will join with the Boy's Brigade as we recall the Christmas story together.

We would be grateful for new unwrapped toys together with some Christmas wrapping paper.

The Salvation Army will once again collect them for distribution before Christmas. Thank you.

Remembrance Sunday

Many of us would like to thank Jane and Roger who, at very short notice, prepared and presented our Remembrance Sunday Service.

It was a most moving and poignant event involving a subject that must be very difficult to tackle. Its success reflects the amount of work and preparation that went into it. Well done!

St Andrew's Calendar

Wed 24th Dec 6.30pm **Christingle Service** is a fun service for all the family, to lead us into Christmas through a variety of activities, interwoven with worship and recalling the Christmas Story through the Christingle.

Sun 18th Jan 6.00pm United Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, at our church.

Weekly/Monthly

Third Wednesday	9.30am	Church Prayer Group
First Thursday	2.00pm	Home Prayer group at 31 Roseberry Mews
Last Sunday	After Worship	Traid Craft Stall
Boys Brigade		Details available from ministers and church elders

Flower List

It's that time of year again! The Flower List for 2015 is now on the notice board for anyone who is interested to add their name to.

Knit-n-Natter

There will be no Knit-n-Natter in December.

Our next meeting at St Andrew's will be on Wednesday 28th January 2015, 1.00pm to 3.00pm.

News from Uganda

A telephone call from Rosemary recently revealed she has not been too well this year as they have had a very wet wet season; and the rains make her breathing problems worse.

Natasha and Maureen, two of her orphaned teenage nieces, have been accepted into college to train as nurses—one under government sponsorship and one with private sponsorship. As their guardian Rosemary will obviously be continuing to support them.

Apophia (niece number 3) is less academically inclined and has returned to the home village where she is being cared for by wider family.

Rosemary is due to retire at the end of next year but sends her greetings to all friends and supporters at St Andrews Church.

Coffee for Charity

19th Oct.	Leprosy Mission	£12.60
26th Oct	Daisy Chain	£15.70
2nd Nov	Shoe Box Appeal	£11.03
9th Nov	Boy's Brigade	£11.50
16th Nov	Church Funds	£15.00

Material for the February Magazine to church editors by Sunday 11th January please

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

Telephone: 01642 300546.

Email: roger.wheeler5@virginmedia.com

Preachers

	7-Dec		14-Dec		21-Dec		Christmas		28-Dec
Marton	10.00am J Harper Meeting		C Morrison Parade/Toy S		J Harper Communion		J Harper 10.00am		K Harris
Guisbo	9.30am C Morrison Nativity		Lesson&Carol		M Johnson		C Morrison 10.00am		M Johnson
Redcar	11.00am		J Harper Lesson&Carol		C Morrison Nativity				B Stevenson
Lingdale	5.30pm C Morrison		Lesson&Carol		C Morrison Nativity		C Morrison 11.00am		
	4-Jan		11-Jan		18-Jan		25-Jan		1-Feb
Marton	10.00am C Morrison		Parade		C Morrison		J Harper		C Morrison
Guisbo	9.30am K Harris Communion		C Morrison		N Johnson		C Morrison		Communion
Redcar	11.00am N Johnson		C Morrison		C Morrison		C Morrison United Gov't		N Johnson Parade
Lingdale	5.30pm C Morrison		C Morrison Communion				C Morrison		