

# *Group News*



## *\* 2019 \* December \* 2019 \**

The monthly magazine for:

**Guisborough URC**

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Part of the URC Northern Synod – [www.urc-northernynod.org.uk](http://www.urc-northernynod.org.uk)

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

# Pastoral Letter

*'For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life.'*

'I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth'. So say the opening words of the Apostle's Creed, a statement of faith designed to put in a nutshell the essential convictions of Christian belief; to summarise what we believe, - or at least what we are meant to believe. The Apostle's creed is an integral part of the Anglican Evensong service, - and can also be found in our own hymnbook, (no. 759). And yet, there is one thing that all such creeds miss out, - a statement of faith that is, for me, equally as important, - the affirmation that God believes in us! We are, of course talking about a different kind of belief, thought not as different as we might at first think. What we see in the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem is God firmly and resoundingly declaring, 'I believe in humanity'!

To understand the full wonder behind that statement we need to remind ourselves what, in the biblical sense it means to say 'I believe'. It doesn't mean accepting the existence of something, in the sense that we might believe in ghosts or flying saucers. It means belief in the sense of trust, putting our faith in something, and being ready, if necessary, to stake our name and reputation on the object of our belief. Seen in that light how many people do we truly believe in? Yet, that is the belief that God has in us. He doesn't see us through rose-coloured spectacles; He is not blind for a moment to all our fallibility and wrongdoings. Yet, despite all that might be wrong in our lives, He sees something precious in us, - special and worth saving, - even worth dying for! In that stable in Bethlehem, the child in the manger, and the life, death and resurrection that followed, we see God's emphatic 'Yes' to humanity, - His affirmation of our worth.

The creeds are important, of course they are, but for me they don't quite say everything; if we haven't understood that God believes whole heartedly in us, then maybe we haven't really understood what it means to say 'I believe in God'. May the Lord bless you and keep you all at this special time of the year, - and may your Advent and Christmas period be filled with love and all good things.

Blessings

Jan

# *Synod Prayers*

## **1 Dec: World AIDS Day**

PCM and the work of Mozambique Council of Churches  
Independent Churches Representative, Dr Mark Bonnington

## **8 Dec: Human Rights Day (10 December)**

The work of Ministries and Development Committee and Convenor,  
Revd Ron Forster  
St Columba's URC, North Shields; Revd Trevor Jamison; St Andrew's  
URC, Monkseaton

## **15 Dec:**

Stamfordham LEP (Methodist/URC); Revd Harold Stuteley  
(Methodist); Bellingham  
LEP (Methodist/URC); Falstone with Kielder URC; Wark LEP  
(Methodist/URC);  
Deacon Anne Taylor (Methodist)

## **22 Dec:**

St John the Evangelist LEP (Anglican/Baptist/Methodist/URC),  
Kingston Park;  
Revd Adele Moorhouse (Methodist)

## **29 Dec:**

PCM, their retired ministers and those newly appointed to posts with  
PCM  
North East England Divisional Salvation Army Commanders, Majors  
David and Gillian Burns

*Group Advent  
Service*

Redcar United Reformed Church  
Sunday 1st December  
11.00am  
Preacher - Rev Meg Robb  
Followed by Faith Lunch

**ADVENT 2019  
'YOU'LL NEVER  
WALK ALONE'**

a promise made a promise kept

sharing the journey

on Wednesday afternoon

4<sup>th</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> December

at 2.00pm.

at

31 Oakley Close, Guisborough,

TS14 7NF

For further information: contact Revd.

Ken Harris, 01287 638500

**Traidcraft Shop  
2019**

**Dundas Arcade  
(formerly Boyes)**

**Middlesbrough**

**Tel: 07903 119 698**

**10am - 5 pm**

**Monday - Saturday**

**until Saturday December 21st**

**Fair Trade Christmas gifts,  
cards and foods**

**from around the world!**

*Hilary Shares:*

Dear Friends,

*O little town of Bethlehem,*

*How still we see thee lie!*

*Above thy deep and dreamless sleep*

*The silent stars go by;*

*Yet in the dark street shineth*

*The everlasting Light;*

*The hopes and fears of all the  
years*

*Are met in thee tonight.*

This carol was very much in my mind as early one morning I made

the journey from the Palestinian family home my sister and I had been staying in in Beit Sahor – an area in Bethlehem Municipality – up into Manger Square.

It was a warm sunny day! The cool of the Church of the Nativity was welcome, even at 8 o'clock in the morning. Already pilgrims and tourists were wandering around drawn to this place 'where it all began'. Although unable to go

deeper into the supposed cave of the Christmas story as there was a service going on, I joined a group of French pilgrims singing 'Gloria, in excelsis deo' with two ladies in saris, 4 ladies with lacy hats, several men of various nationalities all drawn to this place. The hopes of all the years met together in this moment.

However, the eldest daughter of our hosts, a 24 year old science teacher, told us a few days into our visit of her encounter with Israeli Defence Forces who held a gun at the car window directed at her head as she was leaving her fiancé's house telling her to go back to his house. She was still quite shaken. Her father had to be at the checkpoint every morning by 5 to try to get through to his work as maintenance man at a Church in Jerusalem – sometimes (although not when we were there) waiting hour upon hour – or even being turned away. The farmers whose olive crop we were picking were so glad to have Internationals visible in the fields as Illegal Settlers have been allowing farmers to pick their crop, then coming to steal the olives at the end of a hard day's toil. The week before we went a group of 'Rabbis for Human Rights' had also been a protective presence in a Palestinian field and they had been beaten up – including an 87 year old Rabbi. The

fears of all the years were also present in my mind as I reflected quietly in the Church.

As I thought about all of this – and many more experiences – I reminded myself that the very reason Jesus was born in Bethlehem was because the occupying force ordered a census to be taken.

A few days before I had sat outside the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, again surrounded by pilgrims and tourists, contemplating the end of Jesus's life and his weeping over Jerusalem. At times it can seem that the darkness of the world can block out even the glimmer of hope. Yet the very scheme we had gone out under is called 'The Olive Tree Campaign – Keep Hope Alive'. Perhaps those middle lines of the carol are those that we should hold onto:-

*'Yet in the dark street shineth  
The everlasting Light;'*

As Christmas approaches and then recedes into the memory let us keep the everlasting light before us so that the hopes of all the years can become tomorrow's reality.

A very blessed Christmas to you and yours and to those you pray for in this season.

Yours in service  
Hilary

# Guisborough

*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men.*

*Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

Passages from the Gospel of Luke which, as members of the church we should all be familiar with, especially at this time of year. If only the world heard and accepted the message. Peace on earth and goodwill toward men would be a mighty fine thing all year around. It would solve a lot of problems and spare a lot of heartache. Alas, this is not the case, yet.

Christmas time means a lot of different things to different people. Those of a different or no shared faith may call it by a different name and celebrate a different feast or not celebrate at all. We in the church like to celebrate with The Nativity scene and the associated stories. As a child I believed without questioning but the one thing I was curious about was where did Father Christmas fit in? I soon came to accept that ‘he’ was a figure representing a Father giving a gift to all his children. That worked, like Father God sending Jesus as a gift to all mankind. I even convinced myself that ‘Santa Claus’ was another way of pronouncing St Nicholas and heard how he gifted needy children. How disappointed I was when I later found out the truth that every child dreaded to hear. Still, the coca cola Christmas advert was entertaining.

As years went by some hard truths started to hit home. One Christmas I will never forget was when my mother and step father separated. My mother was in bits. That was the year when ‘Santa’ wouldn’t be bringing us any presents, not because we had been bad but because mother had nothing. We visited a relative’s house that year and my cousins raked through their old toys and board games and wrapped a few up as presents for my brother and I. From then on really, I seemed to understand and reflect upon what true kindness is and can be despite the harsh times we were going through, true kindness via an act of love. Christmas times would and did get better.

My first Christmas living in Guisborough was a special one for me. I had moved from Redcar into a small flat above one of the shops on Westgate. I had no TV but a fish tank to watch, CD’s to listen to and a selection of books to read. I had become a bit of a hermit over the previous months but was enjoying the solitude after living somewhat of a chaotic lifestyle for too long. I

## Guisborough Calendar

**Christmas Day**      10.00am A welcome to the Group to a short service for Christmas morning

### Weekly

Thursdays    9.30am – 11.30am Market Day Coffee Morning

Thursdays      11.30am Quiet Time in Church. Prayers and reflections with Maureen, Madge, Ken and others. Details on church notice board

had been reading 'The Story Of Christ' by Giovanni Papini [translated by Mary Prichard Agnetti] and was feeling very inspired. Approaching Christmas 2001 I started getting the feeling that I was going to have a very special visitor and it got so intense that I spent Christmas day cleaning the flat even to the extent of scrubbing clean the couch. There were no heavenly visitations over the Christmas period but in January 2002 (27<sup>th</sup>) I met someone. By March I was married to Andrea.

We lived together in the flat for a few months before we were blessed with an offer from our neighbours [Raymond and Rosemary] to the left of our flat who also owned the house to the right of the flat. We made 'the big move' next door and had plenty of time to settle in before sharing our first Christmas together in our 'first house', 146 Westgate, opposite Westgate Park.

Our first Christmas as parents came in 2004 with Charlie having arrived two weeks earlier. What a wonderful early Christmas blessing he was. Looking back at some of the photos he may not approve of the Christmas pudding and Santa outfits we clothed him in but those memories last. He was known as our little man.

Hattie, our second child, was born a few years later and has added immensely to the joy and celebration we share. Over the years both of our children have given us more love and experience of a blessed marriage and life than could ever be imagined. The gift of children, blessings on our marriage. One can only reflect on the Father's love for His child, the blessing to mankind.

As a husband and a father the difference of giving rather than receiving brought a closer understanding of how 'love' works. The joy of giving. In my opinion it can only be believed and understood through the experiences of

both. The more I feel the happiness of giving to my loved ones and strangers is a fine reflection of the love felt from receiving from our Father God, the gift He gave to mankind through His Son, our Lord Jesus. Though we knew Him not, He gladly gave and loved us.

Later in my family's life together came an event that introduced other elements to our Christmas. Sadness and remembrance. Just as we read of 'Rachael weeping for her children' [that isn't mentioned too much as part of the Christmas story because it muddles the narrative], we remember family members who have since passed and are with us in our hearts. Having a loved one pass away on Christmas Eve 2011 now brings mixed emotions in our household. We'll visit the crematorium and leave some flowers and prayers by their name plaques and support each other with happy thoughts and the fond memories they have left us. We share our views of how they would want us to be happy and enjoy the time God has given us together and all the blessings and goodness that are part of our lives.

As a church, we are God's representatives in our community. What can we 'give' to show His love? Not just at Christmas but all year around. I know through experience and witness that a lot of people 'hurt' at Christmastime. People who will be spending time alone, only with their thoughts and TV to keep them company. Others on the streets with no homes, food, warmth or company. Those things that they lack are the things we could provide. Even if you are not in a position personally to do it you may be able to help and

<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>Vestry</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Door</b>	<b>Flowers</b>
1st Dec	Group Service Redcar			
8th Dec	Ray Tunnicliffe		Maureen Houston	
15th Dec	Peter Etwell		Jenny Reynolds	
22nd Dec	Jenny Reynolds		Martin Burrows	
25th Dec				
29th Dec	Sandra Verrill		The children	
5th Jan	Martin Burrows	Barbara Ward	Darren Thompson	
12th Jan	Maureen Houston		Barbara Ward	
19th Jan	Barbara Ward		Don Beattie	
26th Jan	Donna Moore		Joyce Basham	



support those who help others by donating at foodbanks and charities that cater for such as is needed by the needy.

So Christmas means a lot of things to different people. To me, now personally, our church Christmas time is the beginning of Easter, in that the little child born to a virgin would one day grow up into the man who would gladly go to the cross for mankind. This is the true meaning of the gift to the world from Father God at Christmas time, his story and life leads to the cross at Easter. For what other reason was the saviour born?

*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men.*

*Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

Please accept the following as my gift to you this Christmas time, Life-Light, the message of the gift.

*Life-light. Let there be light*

*Jesus share His grace, lay His blessing on you*

*Jesus give you peace; joy in all that you do*

*Jesus turn His face; let His light shine on through*

*The Lord bless you, keep you; serving you, loving grace of truth*

*Heaven an' earth were made by the Father above*

*Then there came The Light and He saw it was good*

*This Light then turned to man on a mission of love*

*Jesus is the Light of Life, God's Love, His Son and Heir, Jesus!*

*The Spirit of God is hovering over all of the earth*

*It helps to heal the sick and to give man new birth*

*It's there to baptise all whom from sin do return*

*Testifying to the soul of God's true love, His way, The Word, Jesus*

*Now The Father, Son and Ghost all work as one true force*

*Acting as the will of the heavenly host*

*Equal are the parts, Trinity be endorsed*

*Three in one true righteousness of love, The Lord, The King, Jesus*

*Repent and be baptised in the name of The Son*

*Love The Lord your God, pray His Will to be done*

*Help with all your needs through The Spirit will come*

*Gifts of Healing, prophesy, grace, love, light of life Jesus.*

*Darren Thompson*

# St Andrew's

## Toy Service

### Sunday 8th December

We look forward to receiving your gifts for distribution by the Salvation Army to local children in need.



## Christmas Social

Christmas Social is to be held on Wednesday 18th December at 7.30pm.

Entertainment, mince pies, teas, coffees, raffle. Please come along for a lovely time and support Christian Aid.

## Shoe Box Appeal

A great huge thank you to everyone who donated cash, items and knitted lots of hats and scarfs for the Shoe Box Appeal. We sent 46 filled boxes to the collection point. Thank you everyone.

Next year we aim to send the same amount of filled shoe boxes so please save your empty ones and keep knitting!!!

## Flower Fund

Thank you to everyone for their support for contributing to the Flower List. Every date was taken in 2019.

The 2020 List is now on the notice board for anyone who wishes to book a date.

## Coffee for Charity

20th. Oct.	British Heart Foundation.	£19.00
27th. Oct.	Daisy Chain.	£10.00
3rd. Nov.	Leprosy Mission.	£18.00
10th. Nov.	Boys' Brigade.	£30.70

## St Andrew's Calendar

### Weekly/Monthly

Boy's Brigade

Details available from church elders.

# Redcar

## Nearly Christmas Bazaar

Thank you to everyone who helped, baked and bought at the “Nearly Christmas Bazaar” on November 9<sup>th</sup>. Once again it was very well supported and the rain stopped for a few hours, which helped. At the present time we have made over £800 with bits and pieces still coming in. Well done everyone.

### Duty Rota

	<b>Vestry</b>	<b>Door</b>
1 Dec	June	Brenda
8 Dec	Elaine	Brian
15 Dec	June	Brian
22 Dec	Cath	Brian
29 Dec	June	Brian
5 Jan	Elaine	Brenda

Unfortunately at the time of publication I do not have the rest of January's duties



## Redcar Calendar

7 December

Memorial Service

Scout's Christingle Service (date to be decided)

### Weekly

Thursday

9.30am Prayers

10.00-11.30 Pop in Centre

# Preachers

<b>Marton</b> <b>10.00am</b>	<b>Guisborough</b> <b>10.00am</b>	<b>Redcar</b> <b>11.00am</b>
1-Dec Group Service	Group Service	Meg Robb
8-Dec Dave Elliott Parade, Toy Serv	Keith Martin	Jan Harper
15-Dec Jan Harper Communion	Donna Moore Children's Service	Norma Johnson
22-Dec Brian Stephenson Lessons & Carols	Ken Harris	Norma Johnson
25-Dec	<i>Christmas Day Worship</i> 10.00am	
29-Dec Ken Harris	Guis Folk	Jane Rowell
5-Jan K & M Harris	Jane Rowell Communion	Norma Johnson Communion
12-Jan Chris Eddowes Parade	Donna Moore	Brian Stephenson
19-Jan Jan Harper Communion	Ken Harris	Jane Rowell Covenant, Joint
26-Jan Margaret Harris	Rosemary Taylor	Ken Harris

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

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