

# *Group News*



**\* 2022 \* *March* \* 2022 \***

The monthly magazine for:

**Guisborough URC**

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

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

# Pastoral Letter

*'On some have compassion, making a difference' Jude v. 22 (King James Bible)*

It was only the smallest of mistakes, - a single letter inadvertently inserted instead of another, but it made all the difference. Instead of reading 'The Bishop much enjoyed the singing' it read, - and you've probably guessed it, - 'The Bishop much enjoyed the sinning' ! A potentially embarrassing mistake, but a simple reminder that it doesn't take much to give a different result than the one expected.

The verse from Jude above is a case in point. The New Revised Standard version of the Bible translates it 'have mercy on some who are wavering' while the New English Bible goes for 'there are some doubting souls who need your pity.' I actually like the King James translation of the passage, which is possibly the least accurate, and yet the message could hardly be more important, for if there is one thing that should characterise our lives as Christians it should surely be making a difference. It doesn't take much, - a word here a small deed there and the effects can be remarkable. I imagine that few of us will make an indelible impact through our discipleship, but all of us, if our faith is what it ought to be, should make a difference somewhere!

*Jan*

# Guisborough

Central to all worship is the sermon - where we we have the opportunity to hear a message, a religious truth to which we can respond as part of our daily life of faith. Sermons don't have the best of reputations - with the familiar phrase: "a dull sermon" often used to describe its value in terms of worship in general. This is all rather unfair for much can be learnt from the struggles of legions of preachers to discern the word of God and pass the message on to the people of assembled congregations.

From my own long experience as a listener to varied homilies a quick impression could be described like this: as with all things in life sermons can be

divided into three categories - good sermons, mediocre sermons and bad sermons. From this I have long since come to the view that whilst a good sermon is to be preferred the next best thing is a bad one. Both can elicitate a response in the listener, whereas the mediocre simply disappears from memory almost as soon as it is delivered. This may appear to be a harsh judgement, but as a general rule this is often the case.

So what makes a good sermon? In his book, 'A Guide to Preaching' R.E.O. White lays out the essentials for the 'Ideal Sermon.'

- a sermon must draw attention to a religious truth which the preacher thinks important and feels very strongly.
- That truth must be justified by showing its place within the Christian Scripture.
- that truth must be clarified by the preacher so that anyone can understand.
- The sermon must illustrate that truth from scripture from daily life, from literature, from history, from poetry and Christian experience.

## *Synod Prayers*

6MARCH: Our Synod Moderator, Revd Dave Herbert; Synod Clerk, Mel Campbell, Mel's work in both Northern Synod and with the Five Northern Synods as we continue to explore being better equipped for mission through the co-ordination and the sharing of resources; Synod Treasurer, Mr Gordon Wanless.

13 MARCH: Northern Synod Meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> – for the conversations we will have and the decisions we will make! St Cuthbert's Centre, Holy Island; Revd Rachel Poolman (Warden). URC Assembly Executive scheduled to meet 15-17th March. The Acting Anglican Bishop of Newcastle Diocese, the Rt Revd Mark Wroe.

20 MARCH: Waddington Street URC Durham; Bethel URC, Chester-le-Street; Christ Church URC, Stanley; Denewell Avenue and Cromer Avenue URC's, Gateshead; Revd Marcus Hargis.

27 MARCH: PCM, its congregations in and around the capital, Maputo; Chair of the Darlington Methodist District, Revd Richard Andrew

- The preacher must take some trouble to make that truth memorable. Not to be forgotten.
- The preacher must show how this truth applies to me. At some point I must see the difference this message is going to make to my life and my walk with God. I want to hear God speak to me.
- The earnest preacher will leave me no option but to be persuaded by what he has just said. There can be no ‘take it or leave’ it attitude. There should be no browbeating or bullying in this. The truth well expressed should gain my full assent and win in my heart.

A description of the ‘Ideal Sermon’ but how does this fit into our varied experience? I can think of three sermons which have stayed in my memory and so possibly be thought as ideal.

One example I found in a book of sermons. It was delivered at a wedding in the 17th, century. The archaic language unquestionably enhanced the message of how the love of two can be sustained and become deeper over a lifetime. The book was borrowed from Stockton library and removed from stock at a later time. As couldn’t remember the title I’ve been unable to trace it.

Another effective sermon was delivered by Michael Dunford, when minister of St Andrew and St George’s URC, Stockton. Delivered, at a sparsely attended evening service, in the 70’s it struck a chord because of one word: busyness. This referred to the busyness of church life. How busy we are, I thought, so we don’t give ourselves time to reflect fully on the Christian life. Such time for reflection is crucial in maintaining our effectiveness as Christians working for God’s Kingdom on Earth.

And now to my favourite sermon, also delivered as an evening service at St Andrews and St Georges United Reformed Church Stockton. It was a simple commentary on St Mark’s Gospel and preached by an elderly retired minister. The message was illuminating but the important message came at the end. Go home and read the gospel in one sitting. Yes, I did and it takes about an hour. But what an experience to hear the story of Jesus as related by his apostle Peter - just as he remembered it and so I almost felt as though I was there. I recommend this.

Here is a recent sermon as delivered by Ian Smith at Guisborough United from Church on the 6th February. Reproduced by kind permission.

### ***Something to reflect on. - Sermon: Who?Me?***

The Lord makes some apparently our choices of people to follow him and do his work. But if we take the three presented in today's readings we can see some common factors. None of them thought that they were worthy to follow the Lord.

Isaiah wails: "Woe is me! For I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the mist of people of unclean lips; from my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Simon Peter saw this (the monster catch), and fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord, I am a sinful man!"

Paul wrote "For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God."

There are plenty of other examples Jacob was a bit of a rotter, stealing his older brothers inheritance. Joseph flaunted his status as mummy's favourite, and at times was really mean to his family. (After they left him for dead of course.) Jonah really did NOT want to do what God wanted to him to do. Alisha set bears on the children That would not go down well with the safeguarding officer! Moses the patriarch was a murderer. No wonder that some folk reject the old Testament as a book full of not very nice people doing not very nice things. David was an adulterer who abused his position of power.

But God chose people who knew they were unworthy. He could see beyond their immediate lack of faith in themselves to see what they were capable of, what they would achieve. He was not going to choose people who were full of themselves, who could not see beyond their own righteousness.

When a young rich man came to Jesus and told him that he obeyed all the law, so was there anything else he needed to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus punches his bubble of self righteousness by telling him to go and sell all that he had and give to the poor.

Paul had been a self-righteous persecutor of the early Christians. When confronted by Jesus and deprived of his sight he had to humble himself before one of those same Christians. Then he could receive the salvation he wanted and go on to become a great teacher in the church. (Not that his way of doing things, his Christianity, always chimed well with Jesus' practice of The Way.)

Simon rough, tough, foot in his mouth Simon had qualities that Jesus admired. Enough that Jesus would rename him Peter - the rock on which his Church would be built. Even if Peter would deny him three times on Maundy Thursday, even if he would take some convincing to follow Jesus example in delivering salvation to the Gentiles, he had the qualities of faithfulness and rugged determination that would count.

Isaiah would become God's great prophet to the people in exile. His protestation of in worthiness speaks volumes to me.

There have been times when the church has called me to do things that I felt beyond my confidence or worthiness - likely becoming an at about aged 25 and being thrust into the world of District Councils and Synods. Like becoming a preacher. Expect many of you have had your own stories of being called to follow Jesus I can do his will. From initially following his call into the church, to being a Sunday school teacher or a lay preacher, to offering to open the church for free breakfast one morning a week or helping out at the food bank, or reading to children. We all get our own challenges and calls to action. And we are never too old or too young as Abraham David and Mary sow us. What we are called to do may be outrageous or very mundane, may be a once in a lifetime thrill or an every day chore.

Some of us may be or have been called to care for people that are too young, to old too ill, or too incapacitated to care for themselves. It is a calling. Jesus and his people may be able to help, provide encouragement and comfort through the dark days.

So be alert to Jesus calling. I doubt that she will come upon you while you fish for your supper. But who knows? He came to Mary Elizabeth Joseph and Zachariah in the guise of an angel. How many angels do we meet unawares? So keep watch, remain open to his call. Amen.

*Ray Tunnicliffe*

	<b>Welcome</b>	<b>Vestry</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Flowers</b>
6th March	Ray	Joyce	Jenny	Annette
13th March	Martin	Barbara		
20th March	Sandra	Ray		Madge
27th March	Joyce	Jenny		Maureen

# *St Andrew's*



## **World Day of Prayer**

World Day of Prayer is to be held at Nunthorpe Methodist Church, Nunthorpe on Friday 4th March at 2.00p.m.

All are welcome.

## **Coffee for Charity 2022**

23rd Jan.	Teesside Hospice	£25.00
30th Jan.	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£24.00
6th Feb.	Zoe's Place	£23.55

## **St Andrew's Calendar**

### **Weekly/Monthly**

Boy's Brigade

Details available from church elders.

## *Redcar*

### **Our Boiler**

The goods for this month is that our boiler has been restored to life and the church is again warm!



# *Preachers*

	<b>Marion</b>	<b>Guisborough</b>	<b>Redcar</b>
	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>11.00am</b>
<b>6-Mar</b>	Jan Harper AGM	Maranny Jones Communion	Norma Johnson Communion
<b>13-Mar</b>	Jane Rowell	Guis Folk AGM	Jan Harper
<b>20-Mar</b>	Jan Harper Communion	Donna Moore	Julie Martin
<b>27-Mar</b>	K & M Harris	Jane Rowell	Norma Johnson
<b>3-Apr</b>	Maranny Jones	tba	Brian Stephenson

Material for the April Magazine to church editors by Sunday  
13th March please

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