

Group News



** May * 2017 * May **

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

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Easter reflection: continuing the journey with the risen Christ!

I can certainly understand Cuthbert needing to get away from the responsibilities of his ministry to spend time just with God, in prayer and reflection, Bible study and fasting. All my life the Lenten journey has, for me, been a very personal and individual one. Brought up in the Methodist tradition, the preparation for Easter actually began at new year with the awesome Covenant Service, in which we invite God to take our lives for his use.

I would use an old Methodist hymn: ‘O the bitter shame and sorrow’ the last line of each verse inviting us deeper into a personal relationship with Jesus. The first verse ends: ‘All of self and none of thee’ – I could confess this. The second verse: ‘some of self and some of thee’ I could acknowledge but verse three challenged me with: ‘less of self and more of thee’ and I never got to pray honestly the last verse: ‘none of self and all of thee.’

It has been a journey on my own with Jesus – how close to the cross dare I come, how much do I trust God to be with me on that journey, and can I give my life to the one God who has given his life for me? It is a journey of discovery of God’s grace that God loves ‘even me’ – ‘even me’, as well as the millions of brothers and sisters God also loves, and ‘even me’ so selfish and self-centred. This is also a very evangelical discovery, for even as I re-discover: ‘Love so amazing so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all’, then I yearn that everyone will also know the same relationship with God, what it is like to be loved by God so much that they can give their lives to follow the risen Christ.

Here is a cross I made, comprised of precious pots and trinkets to represent all the material things in life that we rely upon, become obsessed about having, even worshipping them. But during Holy Week I smashed them into pieces, bringing them all to the cross on Good Friday: ‘all to Jesus I surrender, I surrender all.’ On Easter Sunday, the whole cross, symbolically carrying all our sin, was

painted gold to reflect the victory of God's love over that sin. There we lay our burdens down, leave them behind and are able to go forward in the same faith of which Paul can attest: 'May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.' (Galatians 6:14 NRSV)

And now a blessed Easter journey with the risen Christ!

The Revd Kevin Watson, Moderator of the General Assembly



Shirley's Lent 2017

As an alternative to 'giving up' something for Lent, my decision this year was to take on something extra—the challenge of worshipping in turn with each of our neighbouring church congregations.

First was choral evensong at St Mary's, led by a visiting Anglican lay reader who regularly helps out Methodist chapels in the Esk valley. The traditional (1666) wording is used and I was just amazed at how firmly my Church of England roots had been planted, the words and settings of canticles such as Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis learned in childhood readily returned. Today though the repetitive liturgy each week would not satisfy.

Next was a midweek service with Nunthorpe Methodists. Held just one Tuesday a month this is becoming increasingly well supported. Seated round a large table, already laid out for the coffee morning which followed, we sang a couple of hymns, joined in the Lord's prayer and, with their current garden project taking shape, were urged to consider building and the success of any structure being dependent upon the hidden foundations.

I joined Marton Methodists for Lent 3, the Ware of Life Sunday (most denominations now use the same lectionary of course). There was a real buzz before the service, but we were quietened for a minute's reflection to prepare for worship. During the service - very similar pattern to our own - the children were involved in placing Lenten symbols below the cross and, after helping to guess the theme, left for their own half hour slot. They have a printed notice sheet and what a difference that makes!

Fridays in Lent are marked by Catholics in Nunthorpe with a 'hunger' (soup) lunch preceded by midday mass. The formal wording can hold new meaning when you've not heard it for a while and as the priest announced to each communicant "the Body of Christ" it seemed like every individual was being commissioned to go out into the world and BE the Body of Christ. Special poignancy in the week of the Westminster terror attack with the gospel for the day from Mark 12 - love the Lord your God and your neighbour as yourself.

Palm Sunday is marked at Marton with parishioners walking in procession from St Cuthbert's Centre into church waving palm crosses. There followed inclusive communion with standard modern liturgy, powerful sermon; children were quizzed on their knowledge of cartoons (relating to powerful characters) and displaying their colouring skills. A cake stall to benefit Christian Aid was a supplement to after church coffee.

2nd April saw the churches across Middlesbrough come together in an evening of celebration 'Christ First' with involvement of community leaders at Macmillan College. A wonderful illustration of

what can happen if we put our inhibitions behind us in response to Jesus prayer “all be one as I and the Father are one, that the world might believe”.

A prayer: Lord open our eyes to see its high time we all put our differences behind us. In your mercy lead us on to obey your will. Amen.

Shirley Moorse

Synod Prayers

7th May:

- *The work of Christian Aid and for generous giving during Christian Aid Week*

14th May:

- *Grindon Mission Project; Boldon URC; St Bede’s URC; Stockton Road URC; Roker URC; Sunderland; Revd Dr David Whiting, Mrs Helen Stephenson (Church Related Community Worker)*

21st May:

- *Mrs Geraldine Sands, our safeguarding officer shared with Yorkshire Synod*

28th May:

- *Trinity LEP (Methodist/URC), Gosforth;*
- *Revd Peter Holwell (Meth) and Ms Mary Bellshaw (Community Worker) who are part of the ministry team there*
- *PCM, the churches in the Limpopo presbyteries in and around Gaza Province*
- *Chair of Newcastle Methodist District, Revd Stephen Lindridge*

Redcar

I compose, you listen

As I grow older I find myself reflecting more and more on my life and the world in general. Again and again I ask the same question ‘Why, why, why is there so much evil in this world? Have we stopped caring? Do we live in a self-centred world where fear rules? At the same time I look around and see how much goodness abounds on my doorstep. I myself have many health problems and I can’t speak too highly of the level of care I receive from medical and nursing staff. Additionally I have friends who gladly provide transport and support when needed. Just recently two friends invited me to breakfast with them.

Then I think of the selfless work carried out by members and friends of the Church; the extent to which they use their gifts in the upkeep of the building, providing a place for worship and service to the community. They are small in numbers, large in heart.

I have composed some piano variations which were intended for orchestral movements (but I will do my best!) This is a gift I would like to share and I am grateful for the opportunity to present them alongside other performers in a musical evening at Redcar Church at 7.30pm on Saturday 3rd June.

Thank you

£218 was raised at our Easter Coffee morning. A huge thank you to all who helped and supported this event.

I am pleased to tell you that I am an optimist and will continue to sing the praises of the lovers in this world and to him who commanded us to love one another.

Haydn Nicholson

Redcar Calendar

Tuesday 2nd May Chatter Group to meet in the Church to discuss future events

Saturday 3rd June 7.30pm Musical Evening at Redcar URC

Weekly

Wednesday 10.30am Singing Group meets in church

Thursday 9.30am Prayers

10.00-11.30am Pop-in Centre

2.00pm Prayer meeting at the home of Catherine Milburn

St Andrew's

Quiz Postponed

Coffee Morning

Due to being "Holiday Time" we have had to postpone the Quiz, Pie and Pea Supper. This will now take place on Saturday 14th October and not Saturday 13th May.

The coffee morning held on 23rd March raised £136.00 for church funds. Many thanks to everyone for their support.

Coffee for Charity

19th March Teesside Hospice £17.00

26th March Daisy Chain £21.50

2nd April Coatham House £20.00

9th April Boys' Brigade £15.50

16th April Childrens Liver Disease Foundation £26.55

Ladies Fellowship

The Ladies' Fellowship heard an interesting talk at their last meeting from Pat Anderson about her voluntary service with the Education Department in Nepal. It was very illuminating.

Our last meeting of the session will be a lunch at Scarlett's, Guisborough on Tuesday 9th May.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Roger and Eleanor on the recent birth of their granddaughter, Sophie Erin.

Our best wishes to them and proud parents Anna drew, Vicky and brother Ethan.

St Andrew's Calendar

Weekly/Monthly

Boys Brigade

Details available from ministers and church elders

Guisborough

One of the things I have missed since I finished my TLS studies is the opportunity to meet with other Christians and study the Bible, discussing how it is still as relevant to us in the 21st Century as it was to the Christians of the 1st Century.

During Lent I had the chance to do this not once but twice. The first occasion was taking part in the Lent course hosted by All Saints Church at Skelton. It was one of the York Courses and the commentators included the Bishop of Leeds, Margaret Sentamu and Theodora Hawksley, a Nun from the Bar Convent in York.

Guisborough Calendar

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 oth- ers. Details on church notice board

They all offered very different perspectives on the question of the course, which was where/how do we receive Jesus, which produced some interesting discussions among those of us on the course.

The second occasion was a retreat day at The Sanctuary in Darlington, led by Rev Ruth Crofton, a retired URC Minister. We were looking at Holy Week through Mark's Gospel and we had the chance to look in depth at how Mark recorded Holy Week and how this differs from the other Gospels. We also had the opportunity to take time out in the grounds of The Sanctuary to reflect on what we had read and discussed, and how it is still relevant to us today.

I always feel refreshed and reenergised by these events, both from spending time with other Christians and spending quality time with God through his Word.

But comments at both events reminded me that we cannot, and should not, stay in a Christian bubble. As much as it may be safe and comfortable to be with other Christians who, on the whole, understand our faith and way of life (although being the only non-Anglican on the Lent course did raise some interesting differences as well as similarities!) that is not what we are called to do. We are called to go out and serve.

One of the sessions on the York course was entitled receiving Christ

in the stranger and the needy and we heard stories of people taking in strangers in need. While they reported varying degrees of success none of them regretted trying to help.

While looking at Mark's Gospel Ruth pointed out two sections in particular. In Chapter 14 Verse 28 Jesus says “But after I have risen I will go ahead of you into Galilee” and later in Chapter 16 Verse 7 Mary Magdalene and the other women are told to go and tell the disciples and Peter that “He is going ahead of you into Galilee.” Jesus never intended his disciples to stay in Jerusalem, to stay at the tomb, but to go out, back to Galilee, and further, to do His work.

Is that a message for us not to stay in our Churches but to go out? As was reported in last months Group News the theme of the last synod day was “Reaching out to others” and the need to engage with our communities.

And that brings me back to the last TLS course I did on developing community experiences. One of the first things we looked at on the course was that we cannot sit waiting for people to come to Church, we the Church has to go to them and go to them in a way that is relevant. We need to find out what our communities want and need from us, even if it is not something we would ordinarily consider. And it does not necessarily have to be something big, even small things can make a huge difference if it is the right thing.

As we journey through Easter towards Pentecost may the Holy Spirit inspire all of us to reach out in whatever way we can.

Susan Griffiths

	Vestry	Communion Door	Flowers
7th May	D Houston	R Tunnicliffe	S Griffiths H Senior
14th May	M Houston		R Tunnicliffe V Beattie
21st May	R Tunnicliffe		D Houston Andrea & Darren
28th May	B Ward		M Houston D Collins
4th June	P Etwell		J Reynolds Claire

Guisborough Choral Society

50 Years of Song

Choir celebrates its half-century with June Festival

Guisborough Choral Society is marking its 50th anniversary by launching the **Guisborough Festival of Song** from 10th – 24th June this year. The choir will open and close the fortnight with two concerts. On Saturday June 10th a **Concert of Light Music** will feature beautiful tunes, beautifully sung: from choral versions of The Beatles and Simon and Garfunkel, through arrangements of folk songs like *Dance to Your Daddy* and *Mairi's Wedding*, to lovely songs by Purcell and Elgar and stirring spirituals, there's sure to be something for everyone. Add in instrumental interludes by Prior Pursglove students and a hugely enjoyable evening is in prospect on Saturday June 10th, 7.30pm in St. Nicholas Church Hall, Bow Street, Guisborough.

The Festival ends with a major concert by Guisborough Choral Society with full orchestra. The **50th Anniversary Concert** will feature Vivaldi's *Gloria*, choral classics such as Schubert's joyous Mass in C Major, as well as Handel's ever-popular *Halleluia Chorus*. A particular treat will be the charming, witty and dramatic *Prayers from the Ark* - readings of Bernos de Gastold's poems and sung settings of them by Ivor Davies. Saturday June 24th, 7.30 pm and Guisborough Methodist Church in Westgate are the time and place.

The middle weekend of the fortnight sees a **Songs of Praise** in Guisborough Priory, presented by Guisborough Churches Together. It's at 2.30pm on Sunday 18th June and all are cordially welcomed to enjoy the singing in the beautiful surroundings. No ticket is required for this occasion. Other events in Festival fortnight are singing workshops for Guisborough primary schools and for local U3A groups.

Tickets for the two Choral Society concerts are: **Concert of Light Music** Adults £6, Concessions £5, under-19s £1; **50th Anniversary Concert** Adults £10, Concessions £8, under-19s £1. Available from Guisborough Bookshop and Greensleeves Music in Chaloner Street, or www.wegotickets.com.

Preachers

	Marton 10.00am	Guisborough 9.30am	Redcar 11.00am
7-May	B Stephenson	K Harris Communion	M Harris
14-May	K & M Harris Parade	I Smith	J Harper
21-May	J Harper Communion	J Henry	C Milburn
28-May	M Harris	Guis Folk	N Johnson
4-Jun	K Harris	M Harris Communion	D Moore

Material for the June Magazine to church editors by Sunday 14th
May please

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