

## EDITOR.

## No. 42.

This is the time of year when we look forward to Advent and the joyful celebration of our Lord Jesus' birth at Christmas, two millennia ago. This year there seems to be little to celebrate in this season of 'Good will to all men.' With a continuing war in Ukraine and in the Middle East The terrible destruction being wrought in Gaza - now spreading out to create a much wider regional conflict - with more death, destruction and miserable living conditions - suffered by so many people trapped in this seemingly endless cycle of violence. On top of all of this we have the threat of 'Climate Change' - so that with rising temperatures and sea levels producing stormy weather patterns - which may make life, as we know it, become unsustainable. Where is the hope for the future?

The Christian life has always offered some such hope - although it can be difficult to see in times like these. Perhaps, we can see it in the small, good things that happen in our lives - and so we are encouraged to believe that indomitable human spirit will win out in the end.

In this edition of the Newsletter, we have a report of planned improvements to the environment, in Guisborough, through the Chapel Beck scheme. Something good happening in the local community. Also, in the gathering together of URC churches, in the new Cleveland Pastorate we can see movement towards strengthening our Christian presence in the area.

In the Middle East conflict, the situation seems dire, but within this chaos there are signs of hope. As reported, in an earlier newsletter, small groups of women - Palestinians and Israelis are meeting together in friendship. Having lost loved ones in this ongoing conflict they have seen that peace and friendship is the only way forward to resolve the conflicts of the past.

It is a small seed that must grow and prosper. We thank God that it is there - one hope of many for the future.

*Ray Tunnicliffe*

### CLEVELAND PASTORATE JOINT SERVICE

On Sunday, 13th, October, the Cleveland Pastorate Service was held in St Columba's United Reformed Church, where the seven churches in the Tees Valley came together in fellowship and mutual support as we look forward to being able to call a minister to service amongst us, as we make our way forward, in difficult times, to find stronger faith, and enthusiasm to spread the 'Good News' that our Lord Jesus brought to the world.

The Rev Kim Plumpton, the Synod Moderator led the worship. The theme of her message was a reminder of the crucial importance, in the Christian life, of our attitude towards other people, in that it must reflect much of the importance of our Lord's reference to the Great Commandment: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and....your neighbour as you love yourself. For when we fail, in this respect, the response can be another friend lost to ourselves - and to possible faith in the Lord.

An important part of the service was when each church was asked to respond to two challenging questions asked by the

Moderator. Questions to make us think, carefully and think big for the future. The questions and Guisborough's answers were as follows:-

- Where is the greatest need in your community?
- There is a great need for a Christian-based 'modern style' activity group for young people in the 11-18 year age range.

Unlike the traditional Sunday Schools the teaching or development of biblical knowledge and a gradual awareness of the real benefits in life of religious faith, would be incorporated within the popular youth activities, which were on offer to the young people.

Last year the Scripture Union held a 95 campaign. The 95 represents 95% of children and young people who have no connection with any Christian fellowship. It is crucial that we correct this for the future of the church.

- If Synod Where to give you £100,000, what would you do with it?
- Not sure that would need as much as £100,000.

If this money was made available it would be good if we could employ some person, or minister, who had the strong desire, talent and ability to give some stimulus to develop additional beneficial activities in the local community. These can include the special youth activities mentioned in the answer to question 1. Or set up a 'Free Skills Exchange' to help people get work done without charge; or to tackle the serious issues of loneliness experienced by many people within our community. And more, much more.....

.....,Did we rise to the challenge - and how effective and practical would be these ideas, when put to the test?

### LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

#### Guisborough Regeneration Programme.

#### Chapel Beck Open Space and King George V Playing Fields

#### October 2024 Update

Two of the projects that form part of the Guisborough Regeneration Programme are Chapel Beck open space and King George V Playing Fields. The aim is to improve the two open spaces, ensuring safe, accessible areas for everyone to enjoy and to create a space for all to use in years to come.

*(The Chapel Beck project focusses on the water course from Bakehouse Square up to Hutton Lane and the key spaces it intersects on the way.)*

Throughout the summer, this year, a number of engagement sessions were conducted where we asked for thoughts and ideas on how we can improve both open spaces for the local community. Various stakeholders, community representatives, schoolchildren and groups in addition to wider dropping sessions for residents and members of the public. The engagement sessions brought about an understanding of the community priorities for the two spaces, appreciate the needs

and wants of the current users, whilst also considering any concerns issues with the existing infrastructure.

Following the engagement sessions and when the feedback was collated, the appointed landscape architects developed concept designs for both Chapel Beck open space and King George V Playing Fields. Open Public Consultation Sessions were held during September where further feedback was sought on the proposals with responses helping to determine the final development design.

The proposal for the King George V Playing Fields will see new wheeled sports facilities such as an improved skate track suited for beginners and a pump track for more advanced riders. Also included will be a specific multi-sport area as well as a natural play zone within the space.

Improvements to the current infrastructure have a price for Chapel Beck, including more accessible and safer footpath throughout the park, improved seating as well as ecological enhancements to the wider Chapel Beck area.

Planning submission documents are currently being drawn up with a view to being submitted in autumn 2024. If approved, it is anticipated that the improvement works will start in spring 2025.

It is good that such improvements to the local environment are being seriously considered and may come to fruition towards the end of next year or early 2026. This is what Guisborough needs, and the local community deserve.

### URC NATIONAL NEWS

#### COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

Commitment for Life is a charity that works alongside the poor in a number of developing countries including Israel and the Palestinian territories and is supported by United Reformed Church.

#### Moving Stories

#### ISRAEL & THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY.

The situation continues to be one of heartrending agony and increasing loss of lives many injured or forced to relocate and the policies and actions of Israel.

As the one year mark has just passed since October 7th, Commitment for Life since heartfelt condolences to the Israeli family's who have been, and continue to be deeply affected by the Hamas terror attacks. We believe that resorting to violence is always wrong, though of course include in this use of structural violence to oppress people and steal land. The URC joins with his partners to lobby the government for an unconditional ceasefire. Commitment for Life remains determined to

support our partners even in a difficult and evolving situation.

Our Christian Aid have asked us to extend CA's heartfelt gratitude to the URC For the generous response to the Gaza appeal. The support received was directed to a party the Palestinian hundred cultural relief committee (PARC), Who identified a need for a more accessible camp for internally displaced persons. With an increasing number of casualties of war many are left injured or amputees not to mention being displaced from their homes. PARC Has been working on co-designing excess ability points for such families.

Commitment for Life wishes to thank Audrey Turner for years of selfless service to the poorest in the world through Commitment for Life. Audrey received her Certificate of Loyal and Devoted Service, which was given to her at the Chesterfield URC Church Meeting on Sunday, 8th, September.

In her response Audrey said how much she enjoyed promoting Commitment for Life and the programmes supported by Christian Aid in our partner country, Zimbabwe. She also said how much she valued the support of the church and local community in fundraising for Christian Aid over many years.

From REFORM the national magazine of the United Reformed Church, viz:-

Arms Licences Suspension a 'First Step.'

United Reformed Church has welcomed the decision by the UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy, to suspend arms export licenses for Israel's military, calling it 'a first step in the right direction'.

The UK government suspended 30 of the 350 existing arms licenses in September following a two-month internal review by the foreign office that raised concern about the way Israel had conducted itself in the conflict in Gaza. The suspension covers components for military aircraft, helicopters, drones and targeting equipment.

The URC Continues to call for a complete secession of arms trading with Israel, as other nations have done including Belgium, Canada and Spain. In July, the URC's General assembly called on the UK government to observe obligations under the International Arms Trade Treaty to cease arms sales to Israel, and to monitor existing embargoes on arms sales to nations that might be supporting Hamas militarily.

It denounced the deadly attacks by Hamas on Israeli citizens on 7th, October, 2023 including the holding of hostages and the deadly attacks on Palestinian civilians in Gaza by the Israeli defence force, calling for those responsible to be held accountable in accordance with international law.

Commitment for Life's partner Global Justice Now said the partial ban was 'a blow to the Israeli war machine' but identified the continued supply of F-35 fighter jet parts as 'a glaring omission' leaving a loophole that allows delivery to Israel via export to the US.

The junior foreign office minister, Hamish Falconer, apologised for the fact that the government's announcement was made the day after six Israeli hostages were killed by Hamas. The

Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, said the decision 'beggars' belief' and the Board of Deputies, Jewish Leadership Council and Labour Friends of Israel reacted angrily.

The URC's General Assembly has called for an immediate permanent ceasefire between Hamas and the Israeli Defence Force and for the immediate de-escalation of hostilities regionally and has denounced all acts of antisemitism and Islamophobia in the UK.

The full report to the URC General Assembly on the Gaza crisis can be seen at:-

[bit.ly/4d4z6dW](https://bit.ly/4d4z6dW)

### **Faith Groups were vital, says Grenfell Report**

The report into the 2017 Grenfell Tower disaster published on 4th, September, brought to attention to the essential role of faith organisations during the tragedy and its aftermath. The help that communities offered to survivors displayed 'the best of humanity', it said.

Reflecting on the night of the fire during a briefing hosted by the Religion Media Centre, Abdurahman Sayed, CEO of Al-Manaar, the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre, set the scene she found at the centre and at the nearby methodist Church were both 'chaotic and heart-touching. People were bringing whatever they had to those who most needed it.'

The Head of Policy and Public Affairs for the National Churches Trust, Eddie Tulasiewicz, said the report underlines the importance of local Faith communities, which office space and volunteers in times of crisis. They are not bureaucratic, he said they can just get on with it.'

In this report we see the value of faith groups in local communities. This is something we have experienced in the work of Guisborough Bridge Association doing award winning projects in our community, through volunteers, over a period of more than twenty years.

### **NOVEMBER SERVICES at 10.00am**

3rd Dr Donna Moore - Guisborough  
10th, Rosemary Taylor - Redcar Methodist.  
17th, Rev Keith Martin - Lingdale.  
24th, Dr Donna Moore - Guisborough.

Everyone is welcome at our services. Come to worship, to learn more about faith in Jesus, or simply to find some good friends.

### **COFFEE MORNING AND PRAYER MEETING**

Every Thursday there is a coffee morning in the church hall from 9:30 am to 11:30 am followed by a prayer meeting at 11:30 am until noon.

Please pop in whenever you can, on market day, and you'll find a cheerful welcome.

# **November 2024**

## **GUISBOROUGH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**



**Founded 1798**

**56, Westgate, Guisborough.**

**Newsletter**

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**Secretary 01287 637273**