

THE 225th, ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

On Saturday 28th of October a Coffee Morning and Historical Exhibition was held in the church to celebrate 225 years of Christian witness in Guisborough. The church sanctuary had tables and chairs lining the east and west walls with a space to allow members of the public to circulate around the building viewing the various pictures, old photographs and documents displayed on the walls. Prominent amongst these were posters describing the pastorates of all leaders of our church from Rev. William Norris, the Evangelist, who founded the fellowship, in 1798, to his lay successor, James Scott, the school master 1802 - 1805 and the first full minister, Rev.. William Hinners, 1805 - 1824 - and onto our last minister, the Rev Catey Morrison, 2006 - 2017 - and now, at present, in vacancy. A total of 38 pastors. The story of Guisborough United Reformed Church began when in the late 18th, century a contemporary writer described Cleveland has sadly neglected religiously. A student from Hoxon Academy, London. Mr Daniel Tyerman on a visit to his hometown of Osmotherley during his college vacation, preached in some of the neighbouring villages with success and with his reports of the lo- level religious observance sent an appeal for help to the Societas Evangelica, of London.

In making his appeal, for spiritual help, in the area of Cleveland, Mr Tyerman was acting as a supporter of the Christian Evangelical Revival that sprang into being towards the end of the century. The people supporting this campaign were known as 'Dissenters' and committed to the notion of free-thought and the practical use of reason in understanding the will of God. They felt that the advocacy of the reign of reason was directed by God alone. For them it was an article of faith that any person - high or low - rich or poor has the means to communicate directly with their

Lord maker - without the need for help or intervention of a priest, bishop, or any other member of the clergy. It was a challenging doctrine, at the time, and many of these dissenters suffered greatly for their beliefs.

Daniel Tyerman's appeal for help, to the to the Societas Evangelica of London, produced almost instant results with William Norris an evangelist, soon arriving to join Mr Tyerman at his home in Osmotherley in October, 1796. As a revivalist preacher his fervent oratory attracted many people back to faith in Jesus and so by 1798 a new church fellowship appeared in Guisborough. In the following year the Protestant Dissenters Meeting House was opened in Westgate funded by a wealthy local widow, Elizabeth Dunn. This house, long since demolished, was situated about 25 metres east of the present church building on a site now occupied by Calverts Carpets. In 1805 William Hinners, a minister from Edinburgh, came to Cleveland and took an interest in the Guisborough fellowship to the extent that a larger church needed to be built. This church, the Ebenezer Chapel, was opened by a renowned, popular Yorkshire preacher, James Jackson, on Thursday, the 31st of October 1811.

That in essence is the story of the founding of our church in Guisborough - and as part of the historical exhibition, a short playlet was performed to illustrate an event when the application for a license to build a meeting house was brought before the local magistrate. William Norris, the evangelist, presented the petition, supported by Elizabeth Dunn, who offered to have it built in her yard on the north side of Westgate.

The play was performed before a small, but appreciative audiences, on two occasions - with the actors Angie Etwell and Ray Tunnicliffe enthusiastically bringing to life the events of so many years ago.

GUIS-FOLK SERVICE

On the following day, 29th of October, an event, very much in the present, was presented as the Guis-Folk Service, where all members and friends of the church were invited take part and make a contribution to the worship. The chairs were arranged in a circle so that no one had a position of prominence, but that everyone was equal. Jenny Reynolds, the church secretary, began the worship with the opening prayers. Later in the service we had a time of talk and reflection about the members and friends of our fellowship. This was an important part of the service as we thought and prayed for various members and friends, taking into account in their varied personal circumstances. Having care and concern for others is a crucial part of the Christian life - giving joy and strength to our faith.

Two Bible readings and accompanying reflections were given during the course of the worship. They were:- Matthew 22: 34 - 46. Entitled the Great Commandment and 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-8 entitled: A Duty to God and Others. The Reflection on the first reading focused on the idea of love your neighbour and then onto a discussion about the Israeli Gaza conflict. From this an essential question arose: how is it that we can't get on with each other - given that we believe we are created in the image of God? In the

second reading we have St Paul defending himself from unjust criticism. This was like and how many people may see us now as simply churchgoers and not really Christians. How do we defend ourselves from such criticism and give support and defence of our faith in Christ?

The prayers for other people and terrible situations in the world where a combined effort from the people present. Each speaker expressing their feelings about some event in the world today. The service ended with a blessing from Romans 15: 13: May The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Amen.

Christian Aid's response and Appeal to the current Middle East Crisis

On Saturday, 7 October, Hamas launched a wave of rocket attacks and stormed into Israel, leading to the biggest escalation in violence there has been in the region. Members of armed groups entered Israeli towns, communities, and military facilities near the Gaza Strip, killing and capturing Israeli forces and civilians.

William Bell, Christian Aid's Head of Middle East Policy & Advocacy, says, "Following atrocities against Israeli civilians, Israel's military response in Gaza is now creating an escalating humanitarian crisis that threatens more than two million people."

Christian Aid has been working with the poorest and most vulnerable people in the Middle East since the early 1950s, when it provided humanitarian relief to Palestinian refugees.

Christian Aid's established partners in Gaza are ready to respond with medical relief and

community-led initiatives such as food, shelter, sanitation, and protection.

Commitment for Life thank you for your continued support to Christian Aid and its partners in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian territory. Your donations can make a huge difference to the current conditions of those affected.

Prayer

Creator God, we thank you for the creative thoughts and talents you have given each one of us. Help us to use those gifts in ways that express your sadness over global justice issues which affect people in regions such as Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. May our hearts be so moved that our response is simply to love and support these people, as you would, in the best way we can through *Commitment for Life*. Amen.

SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER at 10.00am

. 5 Dona Moore Guisborough
12 Bill Reynolds Guis CF
19 Donna Moore Church Meeting
26 Keith Martin Lingdale

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 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 will find a cheerful welcome.

November 2023

GUISBOROUGH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



Founded 1798

56, Westgate, Guisborough.

News Letter

November 2023

Secretary 01287 637273