

Group News



*** 2022 * *November* * 2022 ***

The monthly magazine for:

Guisborough URC

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Our churches are members of the Cleveland Joint Pastorate

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

www.eastclevelandurc.org.uk

Pastoral Letter

‘Those who exploit the poor insult their Maker, but those who respond to the needy do Him honour.’

Proverbs 14: 31

Do you remember your first chemistry experiment at school? I can just about remember mine, and it involved a piece of litmus paper dipped into a test-tube of liquid to see if it turned red or blue, indicating acid or alkali.

There is something of that test in the words of Jesus concerning the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25, vv 31-40, only this test concerns something very different, - how faithfully we respond to Christ.

What are the distinguishing features we should look for? Doctrinal soundness? Faith that can move mountains? Gifts of the spirit? The ability to speak in tongues? An impeccable church attendance? Not according to the parable of the sheep and the goats they’re not!

What counts rather, is whether we have responded to people in need; whether we have shown our faith in action, expressing through our care and compassion the love of Christ. That, we are told, is the litmus test of Christian discipleship.

Of course we need to consider such words in the light of Christ’s teaching concerning mercy and forgiveness, but we shouldn’t use that as an excuse to evade or tone down their challenge.

Faith may not depend on works, but it ought to result in them, at least in part. The warning here is not so much that Jesus will reject us, but that through turning our back on others we may find that we have rejected Him!

Grace and peace to you all.

Shalom.

Jan

Synod Prayers

6 November:

PCM, their churches of the Central Presbytery and the Presbytery of the North. The Anglican Bishop of Whitby, the Rt Revd Paul Ferguson. International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians.

13 November:

Remembrance Sunday; Zion URC, Northallerton; Northgate URC, Darlington; Keld and Low Row URC.

20 November:

Women Against Violence Sunday. St Margaret's URC, South Shields.

27 November:

World Aids Day Dec 1ST. St Andrew's LEP (Methodist/URC), Benton; Revd Gavin Hume (Methodist); The Church of the Good Shepherd LEP (Anglican/Methodist/URC), Battle Hill; Revd Julie Mooney (Anglican).

Synod Report - October

I believe I was the sole representative for the East Cleveland Group at the recent Northern Synod so I thought I would share a few impressions from the day.

We were chaired ably and cheerfully by our Green Apostle, the Reverend Trevor Jamison, as our Moderator was chairing the North-Western Synod, a good example of Northern Synods working together.

Our worship was led by Valerie, an Elder at St Andrew's URC, Monkseaton, who, like us, are in vacancy. She read from the Gospel of Matthew 6:25-34,

the passage that ends “Do not worry about tomorrow”, easier said than done in these troubling times.

The Trust presentation always goes over my head a bit, sorry Jane, but I did understand the bit about examining our expenses one by one and challenging our priorities. The Trust have parted from their usual practice this year, of just increasing all expenses by inflation, and have examined each one in more detail. Is this still a priority for the Synod? Is this what we should be spending our money on?

They are urging all churches to do the same. It is, after all, what we will all be doing as our bills go up and for many of us our income remains the same.

There was considerable discussion about the sale of redundant manses as some churches were worried about losing the rental income that they had come to rely on. There was some talk of deferring a decision but, with reassurance that sale of a manse would have to be the decision of the Church Meeting, and not imposed by Synod, the new Manse Strategy was accepted.

We had an excellent presentation from our 3 CRCWs about the important and interesting work they do. Fliss won extra points for bringing Woolly the sheep and allowing the stand in Moderator to have his “Blofeld moment” as he sat stroking him during her presentation. Ann Honey has started work at Billingham and Alison is very busy in the Sunderland area where Roker Life has won an award for their community work.

We received a reminder of the suffering of others from the North East Churches against Poverty organisation. We were asked not to circle the wagons and become defensive but to reach out to others and to share what we have. There were lots of ideas of how to help and how we can receive help to do what we do.

If we want to open our church buildings to provide a Warm Space we can register with the Warm Welcome Campaign and we can get help with publicity.

Matt Knowles gave us a brief update on Safeguarding and reminded us how vital this is. It isn't just a box ticking exercise. Foundation Training is now online from the Synod website. Intermediate Training is online via Zoom/

Teams or in person. There is a new administration assistant, Paula Kitson, to approach about training.

As the Group Safeguarding Co-ordinator it would help if you could let me know where you are in your training and what needs you have to meet Issue 5 of the Safeguarding Advice from the URC.

There is a lot of help available for working with children and young people. There is a meeting called First Steps at Billingham on Thursday 10th November at 7-9pm for anyone who is interested in starting in however small a way to reintroduce younger people into church life or church people into their lives.

There is a new Sales and Lettings policy coming your way Finance and Property folk. There will be some Stepwise groups starting up soon under the auspices of the new Learning and Development Officer, Lucy Cooke. If you have been thinking about exploring your Faith in more depth then this would be a good opportunity. You can do it alone or with a friend or group. You will need a local mentor and a computer between you would help.

Some items were brought to our attention from General Assembly.

Youth Assembly have asked us to train and appoint a Mental Health First Aider for each church and to listen more to children and young people and their views. Perhaps if we had listened more they would not have drifted away.

We are being urged to be Green Churches. We have heard from our Green Apostle but we must make sure we are not just offering lip service.

We are also being urged to campaign and offer care for Asylum Seekers. Their prospects never seem to get any easier. As resources become strained this could be used as an excuse for inhumanity and injustice. We must speak out and share what we have to set an example and be a light in the darkness.

That is a long list of asks and how are we to achieve this?

We ended with a short quote from Philippians 4:13

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Donna Moore.

Guisborough

50 years ago on the 5th of October 1972 the annual assembly of the Congegational Church in England and Wales and the general assembly of the Presbyterian church of England met for the final times, together in The Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, where they dissolved themselves and formed the United Reformed Church.

And to celebrate this event, the first coming together of denominations of the Presbyterian Church of England and most of the churches of the Congregational Union, since the the Reformation in the 16th century, a service of thanksgiving was to be held in the Methodist Central Hall in Westminster. Unfortunately, the event had to be cancelled because of the rail strike. Such a disappointment - but was it? Or was it a signal to us from God to pause for a moment and think seriously of where we need to travel in the next 50 years?

The Rev Dr John Bradbury, General Secretary of the URC, in a reflection on our 50th, Anniversary, made the following observation: “..... it is really something to celebrate this year, but in 1972 the faithful people of the Presbyterian Church of England and the Congregational Union caught that vision and set out on a journey. The hope was vivid and vital, but the journey would become much more richer if others would join us on the way to a greater united church on the shores. The churches of Christ and the Scottish Congegational Church caught that vision. However the ecumenical contacts shifted around as an organic physical union that had been so important to the folk in 1972 no longer feels like the primary ecumenical concern. Which leaves us as the United Reformed Church at a seminal moment in our life. We responded faithfully to the call of God. But the journey, as so often with with God, did not take us to quite the place that we expected. So at this milestone of 50 years we will celebrate the faithfulness of those who went before us, but also must ask profound questions about who we are called to be - what we are called to do here and now in a place where God has put us.....?”

Dr Bradbury’s salutary observation put me in mind of one of the celebrated epigrams of Oscar Wilde, the famous playwright and poet when he said: “There are only two tragedies in life: The first is not getting what you want

Guisborough Calendar

27th November

Guis Folks service followed by Church Meeting

Weekly

Thursdays

9.30 – 11.30 Market Day Coffee Morning

10.30 – 11.30 Church open for prayer

11.30 Short prayer service led by Ray or Maureen.

and the second is getting it.” So to be successful messengers of faith in Jesus Christ we need to listen to God in our prayers and he will guide to what we need to do - rather than what we think is best course of action.

On Sunday, the 2nd of October, the Guisborough church celebrated the 50th anniversary of URC. The theme of the service was optimism. This may be difficult in present circumstances, given that we have a war in Ukraine, a cost of living crisis and now, more recently, a financial crisis in our country, that could be a real threat to our general well-being. In addition there is the difficult fact, that since the URC was formed, we have declined in numbers until now we have around 40,000 faithful people. But as Dr Bradbury has said: “The journey, as so often with God, did not take us to the quite the place that we expected.” This is a position we have to face squarely and faithfully with trust in God and his son Jesus.

In the service we performed the dramatic sketch: “The Reformers”, which took us back to our roots in the past, our coming together as a new church and was first presented at the 40th, Anniversary Service held at St Andrew’s URC in Marton. We had a birthday cake, sang happy birthday and retired to the hall to enjoy a piece of a delicious fruit cake.

On the following Sunday Chris Eddowes, our preacher from St George’s in Hartlepool, could not attend as she was suffering from a COVID infection. The members of the church presented the service, from her notes, and it worked well. So God does move in mysterious ways.

Recently, Madge Baird, our organist, had noticed that the organ was not playing as well as usual. In September an inspection by C & N Holford Pipe

Organ Builders of Ossett, West Yorkshire, revealed serious cracks in the wooden sound boxes which allowed air

to drift into more than one note key when the organ was played. These boxes needed extensive repair at an estimated cost of £14,000. The elders had an emergency meeting and agreed to this work being done. Fortunately the church will be able to claim a grant covering half of the cost from our Synod office in Newcastle.

The organ has an interesting history. It was installed in the church in 1905. Before this time a harmonium accompanied the singing - that is until the Reverend Wardel Ridley accepted a call to the pastorate in 1901. he was a man of great drive and energy and came to Guisborough on the condition that the previously proposed building plans were pushed through. On arrival he visited towns throughout Yorkshire, on behalf of the project, and in six months raised sufficient money to build the Sunday school hall, vestry, new frontage to the church, pews, central heating and other improvements.

Central to these alterations was the installation of a pipe organ. Originally built for another church, the date of construction is not known - possibly in the 1880s by Peter Conacher & Co of Huddersfield. It was dismantled and brought to Guisborough where it was rebuilt. The lady accompanist, on seeing this huge instrument during the course of its construction, became rather alarmed at the prospect of being expected to play it and so declined. Another accompanist needed to be employed for its first performance on Sunday, 16th, July, 1905.

So at the start of a new half century we will have a great sound to accompany our singing.

Ray Tunnicliffe

	Door	Vestry	Communion
6 Nov	Barbara	Ray	Jenny
13 Nov	Darren	Jenny	
20 Nov	Ray	Martin	
27 Nov	Jenny	Peter	
4 Dec	Martin	Maureen	Joyce

St Andrew's

Happy Birthday...

Happy Birthday to Elsie (Williams) who celebrated her 99th birthday recently.
Happy Birthday Elsie. We send our congratulations and love to you.

Warm Place

The church lounge is to be a Warm Place every Friday from 10.00 am to 2.00pm. We will be making hot drinks available and all will be welcome to come, relax and stay warm.

Church members prepared to help with the venture by providing a presence on the premises, please speak to Eleanor or Roger.

Coffee Morning

and

Advent Meditation

With Ken and Margaret Harris

Saturday 3rd December

10.30am to 12.00

Coffee for Charity

18th September	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£16.30
25th September	British Heart Foundation	£23.00
2nd. October	Teesside Hospice	£27.05
9th October	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£22.50
16th October	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£19.20

St Andrew's Calendar

Weekly/Monthly

Boy's Brigade

Details available from church elders.

Redcar

Joint Worship With Baptist Church

On 2nd October the membership at the Baptist Church voted unanimously to move their services to Station Road, so we are looking forward to having much more life in our Church from January.

The Elders have had a few meetings with Mark in the last few weeks and Sue Walker joined us for one last week.

We finally found the boiler room key and got the boiler working. Fortunately we have not needed it up till now. There may be a chance that we will get a new boiler in a couple of years as the church is in the "catchment area" for a new hydrogen boiler if the scheme wins the bid over Ellesmere Port.

Mark has already applied for funding to make the church hall a designated "warm space" with free meals, tea and coffee, something like the pop in used to be. We now need to declutter the church and sort out cupboards etc., which is something we have been meaning to do for years but have not had the personnel to complete the task.

It is safe to say that things are moving in the right direction and the Light of the Lord is moving in the space.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Thank you to all who attended or donated to my MacMillan Coffee Morning. I banked £170.50 last week. I believe that may be a record for one of my coffee mornings. However it took me until October 23rd to finally finish off all the leftover cakes and biscuits!

June Haverson



Preachers

Marthon	Guisborough	Redcar
10.00am	10.00am	10.30am
6-Nov Jan Harper	John Ellison Communion	Redcar Baptist 10.30am Service
13-Nov MartonWT	Ray Angelsea	tba
20-Nov K & M Harris Communion	Donna Moore	Redcar Baptist 10.30am Service
27-Nov Jan Harper	Guis Folk Church Meeting	Brian Stephenson 10.30am Service
4-Dec Jan Harper Church Meeting	Donna Moore Communion	Redcar Baptist 10.30am Service

Material for the December/January Magazine to church editors by Sunday
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