

# *Group News*



**\* 2024 \* October \* 2024 \***

The monthly magazine for:

**Guisborough URC**

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**Redcar URC**

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**St Andrew's URC, Nunthorpe and Marton**

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Our churches are members of the Cleveland Pastorate

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

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

# Pastoral Letter

*' Let everyone give as their heart leads them to do, not reluctantly or because it is expected of them, - for God loves a cheerful giver.'*

*2 Corinthians 9 v.7*

There are few things in life that we like less than having something done for us out of duty. What might otherwise have been a valued act of service brings instead a sense of humiliation; what appeared to be an act of friendship becomes a cause of rancour; what seemed to be a hugely generous gift feels suddenly like a tarnished trinket, all but worthless. We want people to respond to us because they want to, not because they feel they should. We want their dealings with us to be transparent rather than hiding some ulterior motive. What we don't want, above all, is to be patronised!

We do well to bear that in mind when it comes to our relationship with God, for all too easily the service we offer Him becomes a matter of duty rather than a privilege. We don't intend it to happen, nor are we always conscious of doing so, but little by little the sparkle in our faith fades and the spontaneity that once characterised our relationship with God has become a routine of going through the motions. We bring our offering because it is expected of us; we read the Bible because we feel guilty if we don't; we say our prayers because we feel we ought to, - and we hope that God won't notice. Is that what he wants from us? Not at all. He wants us to love Him, serve Him and worship Him not because we must but because we may. He wants us to offer our discipleship not because we should but because we can. If we bring it for any other reason, maybe it's time to stop and think, for it might be that God feels just as we would in His place....that He'd rather we didn't bring it at all!

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Shalom - Jan

## **Cleveland Pastorate Service**

**Sunday 13th October**

**11.00am**

**Billingham URC**

Marsh House Avenue, TS23 3AB

Preacher

**Rev Kim Plumpton**

Synod Moderator

# *Synod Prayers*

## **6th October**

World Homeless day (10<sup>th</sup>).

## **13th October**

Giving thanks for Local and Lay Preachers. Lay Preaching Advocate: Dr Ann Sinclair. Lucy Cooke: Learning and Development Officer. Ministries and Development Committee, Convenor: Revd Sally Bateman. The blessing of retired ministers and lay leaders.

## **20th October**

Churches: St Margaret's, South Shields; Roker and Stockton Road; Minister: Revd Jane Rowell.

## **27th October**

Misson Projects: Keld Resource Centre, Mrs Helen Guy and the Management Group. Holy Island and the Management Group, Convenor: Sheila Duncan

# *A Celebrated Life*

## **Revd Norma Johnson 1944- 2024**

The Revd Norma Johnson was a warm, friendly and generous person; a true follower of Jesus and an encourager of others' faith.

Born on the 26th January, 1944 in South Shields, Norma was the youngest of five children. She was close to all her siblings, especially Ann, to whom she was closest in age and with whom she shared her wedding day. From an early age she attended St Margaret's church South Shields with her family.

After her schooling at South Shields Grammar, Norma trained as a nurse and won the South Shields General Surgical Prize at the end of her course. She nursed until 1978, when she became disillusioned as nursing now seemed to her

less caring, if more professional. So, she worked on supermarket tills in the evenings, which also afforded more time with her two children

In 1991, Norma answered to the call to ministerial training and attended Westminster College, Cambridge. She thoroughly enjoyed her placement year at Grindon URC, Sunderland. This now closed church functions as The Grindon Community Project. This was a development of which Norma approved. Ordained as minister on 11th June 1994, Norma initially served the churches of the East Cleveland Group.

Her churches embraced the new ideas about worship which Norma brought. She is remembered fondly as being ever ready to share her own faith and draw on her own spirituality and life experience, in addition to encouraging social activities within the fellowship. Norma fostered an outward-looking approach to church life which sought to serve local communities.

In 2005, she became minister at Clitheroe URC, where her enthusiasm and warmth was very much welcomed. Norma retired in 2009, returning to the seaside town of Marske in her beloved North East where she remained very active in local churches, preaching regularly and worshipping at Redcar URC.

Ever keen to serve her neighbourhood, Norma helped set up The Pop In at Redcar URC, a community coffee morning with a particular focus on welcoming refugees and asylum seekers and lent a hand at the Remembrance Cafe in Redcar.

She had a wide range of interests including dancing, theatre (especially musicals), pottery and badminton. In retirement, along with husband George, Norma joined the Teesside Cycling club, riding a tandem and faithfully doing club admin.

Although Norma actively encouraged her churches to serve their local communities in practical ways, she was sustained by a quiet contemplative prayer life, making many visits to places such as Iona, Holy Island and Ffald-y-Brenin. Her enthusiastic support for Redcar's new venture: the establishment of a Residential Missional New Monastic Community was not surprising.

With thanks to God, we remember Norma as woman of great Christian faith, who enjoyed life and loved her family and community with a generosity of heart which was quietly inspirational. After a brief illness, she died peacefully in a local care home and is survived by her beloved husband George, two adult children and two grandchildren.

*Rev Sue Walker*

# Guisborough

## Hope

How easy it is to relinquish the feeling of hope in today's society. The world is in turmoil with violence being unveiled via media sources news, radio, Facebook, tick tock, twitter. Random acts of aggression are given time and space within the media circus, all seems full of despair no act of kindness to present hope available. Has the world always been this way or is it simply that the worst of man is made available, as if a pleasure through these hungry media sources.

Where is hope? Where do you find it, hold it, is it tangible can I touch it feel it hear it?

Hope is where the heart is. Every year when I write this piece I reflect about my family and most often my granddaughter who now six and continues to guide me in ways I have never thought. We have moved away from our games of monsters, dragons' fairies and have evolved into more grown-up role's emergency doctors. We have clinics with a variety of dolls from assorted sizes who have been hurt usually due to volcanos or any natural disasters. With our crayons and paperclips, we cannulate, take blood, inject, and perform many medical procedures to ensure our plastic patients are cared for. What has this got to do with hope?

I see hope in my granddaughters face she is learning behaviour shows empathy, love, and a need to care. Admittedly she may relate more to medical nuances as both parents are in the nursing profession as emergency workers.

## Guisborough Calendar

### Weekly

Thursdays 9.30am – 11.30am Market Day Coffee Morning  
10.30am Church open for Private Prayer  
11.30am Quiet Time in Church for Prayers and Reflections.

She innocently caresses her patients and whispers ‘it is all right your safe ‘and then explains how she will make them better. She however never sugar coats the fact that a cannula or injection may hurt she tells it how it is. This is something she has experienced and is relating through play. Hope is the future, my hope envelops me like a gossamer veil each time I see kindness, hear laughter. The sound of singing, dancing, and loving are hope revealed in splendour.

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Romans 15: 13*

When you are next out listen for the bird song, and think, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they. Mathew 6:26. Look, listen, see, hope is all around God is with us in our very essence he knows our sentiments expectations and our inner most thoughts and he loves us as we love him.

There is hope.

*Angela Etwell*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Vestry Elder</b>	<b>Door</b>
6th Oct	Peter	Darren
13th Oct	Billingham	
20th Oct.	Joyce	Martin
27th Oct.	Ray	Sandra
3rd Nov.	Jenny	Joyce

## *St Andrew's*

### **Harvest Service**

The Harvest Service is to be held on Sunday 6th October.

Donations of tinned or packet foods plus toiletries will be taken to Middlesbrough Food Bank. Many thanks.

### **Soup Lunch**

The date for the Soup Lunch has not been fixed yet. It will probably be either late October or early November.

The proceeds will be for the Rosemary Fund.

## Rosemary

After a recent enquiry here is an update about Rosemary in Uganda, last with us here in summer 2010. Now 69 and retired from a long nursing career, she has relocated back from Kampala to Kabwohe village, sharing her home with a brother and his daughter with three children, after a marriage breakdown.

The children attend village schools. She writes that rains are beginning so planting season will be starting soon. When she feels well enough she will take a motor cycle taxi to the nearest shopping centre. She always wants news of St Andrews folk and is so thankful for our support in the past. Her faith remains strong and she writes “What we need to do is hold on to our faith in God and wait upon Him for direction and His will for our lives”.

## Coffee for Charity

11th August	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£18.85
18th August	Zoe's Place	£21.00
1st September	Middlesbrough Food Bank	£22.20
8th September	Boys' Brigade	£19.90

# Redcar

## Reflective Service

Our reflective service is held in Redcar URC on the second Thursday of the month, the next being 10th October at 11am.

All are welcome.

## A Service of Joy

We enjoyed an inspirational service on the 15th September which included four baptisms! It was so wonderful to see a full church!

*Elaine*

# Preachers

	<b>Marton</b>	<b>Guisborough</b>	<b>Redcar</b>
	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>11.00am</b>
6-Oct	Donna Moore Harvest	Jan Harper Communion	Redcar Baptist
13-Oct	<b>Cleveland Pastorate</b> Kim Plumpton - Joint Service 11.00am at Billingham URC		Redcar Baptist
20-Oct	Jan Harper Communion	Keith Martin	Redcar Baptist
27-Oct	Ian Smith	Brian Stephenson	Redcar Baptist
3-Nov	Maranny Jones	Donna Moore Communion	Redcar Baptist

Material for the November Magazine to church editors by Sunday 13th  
October please

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