

## Guisborough United Reformed Church Newsletter October, 2020

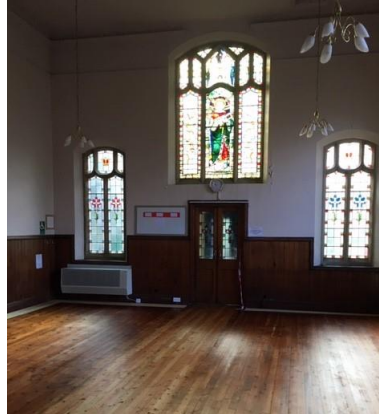
***Thanks for taking our News Letter. We're not open at present but working hard to get there.***

Seems like another age since we have been able to meet together in the church for worship. Now that the sanctuary floor has been restored, and chairs are to be delivered, we should be in a position to begin services with our friend, Ken Harris, being the preacher at the reopening of the church for worship in the near future.

The Absolutely Floor Restore Company were awarded the contract to clean up the floor boards and replace the unsightly plywood panels covering the channels where the old, 1905, central heating pipe work had been located. These were removed in 1978 when the gas heaters were first installed, now replaced by a new, modernised, version of the same model. The work has been done at a cost of £2,790.00. In the photographs we can see a workman sanding down the floor surface and the finished project. As it was not practical to have a good match with the old floor boards, it was agreed to have contrasting border surrounding three walls.

Now that the pews have been removed the church sanctuary area can be used in a more flexible way not only by ourselves but other groups in Guisborough – and by so doing make it more of a community hub.

*Ray Tunnicliffe,  
East Cleveland Group URC Magazine Coordinator for  
Guisborough Church.*



### **THE EVENTS OF LOCKDOWN**

The restrictions imposed by the government to combat the effects of the Covid-19 virus has meant that the Guisborough fellowship have not been able to meet together since Sunday, 15th, March, when Ian Smith from the St Andrew's Mission, Thornaby, led us in worship. His message to us on that day was unusual in that a question and answer session replaced the sermon. The theme was about water: Moses finding water; the living water coming from a rock and the incident of the Samaritan woman meeting with Jesus, at the well. Being a Samaritan and a woman without a husband meant that she was initially astonished that Jesus, a Jew, would have any dealings with her. So in the following discussion, within the congregation, Ian drew out the idea that this most unlikely person recognised our Lord for who he was and then went back to her village as an effective evangelist for faith in him. How often do we go out to talk of our joy and faith in Christ was the final question? Like Jesus we may find the most unlikely of people respond. Three days later

the church was closed and we entered into the uncharted waters of faith.

The Church was closed but the work continued. Ken and Margaret Harris soon set up an online Thursday prayers and Sunday service, with Madge Baird assisting them in the project. This service for the congregation has been presented throughout the time of the church's closure and for such a big commitment we are most grateful. In addition, Joyce Basham our assistant secretary, has relayed the Synod E-news letter to members and friends - a much appreciated source of information about events and new ideas circulating in the Northern Province of the URC.

On 9th, April, after more than a year in vacancy, the church flat became occupied by a new tenant with dog. We hope that they will stay in this residence for some time.

On Monday the 18th, May, David Houston, a long serving member of Guisborough Church, who had suffered from ill health for some time, sadly died. At the time our thoughts, prayers and condolences went out to his wife, Maureen and family. David and Maureen first joined our church in September, 1969 moved to Malaysia in December 1975. Returned later in October 1977 to be part of our fellowship until the present time. There will be a Memorial service for David, at a later date, when we will have the opportunity to pay our respects in his memory.

In June Darren Thompson and Sandra Verrill of the Property Committee, aided by Dan, our gardener, removed the pews from the sanctuary and arranged for their sale to several eager buyers.

In July the elders and Property Committee met for a planning meeting to push forward the work on the refurbishment of the sanctuary. This was followed by the installation of the new heaters on the 16th, July. Another meeting was held in August to keep track on progress and discuss safety matters in connection with the Covid 19 virus. This led

onto work to restore the wood floor done between Monday, 28th, September and the 1st, October. We now look forward to the chairs being delivered towards the end of the month - and then to reopen the church for services.

The elders are now working with the Rev Norma Johnson, of Redcar United Reformed Church and our former minister, on arrangements that will enable us to have regular services again.

The two other churches in the East Cleveland Group of the United Reformed Church are now open; St Andrew's at Marton on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, August and Redcar on 13<sup>th</sup> September. We look forward to joining them when the refurbishment is completed.

## COMMUNITY

**Guisborough Bridge Association:** The Association was set up by churches in Guisborough, in 2001, to develop a "bridge" between the Christian fellowships in the town and the local community by responding to needs of local people where these were not fully covered by other existing organisations.

***Shona Joselin, long serving Bridge worker, writes here about the current position:***

Things have been changing greatly and sadly, moving forward, we feel that it will be quite a long time before many of the Bridge pre-Covid projects can return but at the same time other needs have come to the fore and we have some new projects that we are looking to develop over the coming months so we felt the time was right to share some of the vision as we move forward.

Obviously over the Covid 19 lockdown we have been providing the Foodbank daily from Monday to Saturday and a huge thanks to the Methodist Church for the use of their building during lockdown ... it made a huge difference and made a work so much easier. We have healthy stocks but are seeing numbers rise as furlough is ending and normal referral agencies are opening up more.

We also did lots of shopping for vulnerable families [over 300 shops], now thankfully reduced as we seen more support from supermarkets and the easing of the restrictions, 😊 and we made about 2000 Prescription deliveries; although we have stopped [except for emergencies] at this current time we are ready to jump in if the situation becomes tricky again – we have

established good relationships with the pharmacies who have been very grateful for the support.

Our Holiday Hunger and Families link work has grown [replacing some of the Get Set Go/Fun & Food4All/Holiday Club events] and over the summer we provided 100 children, and more than 250 people when we include their families, with weekly crafts, activities, challenges and food – we looked at the Fruit of the Spirit with 2 videos/stories per week and it has received an incredibly positive response with some lovely comments – we are planning monthly craft packs/October activities and have some interest in some small after school homework.

We managed a Summer Fruits finale at the Priory with a lovely socially distanced picnic and Treasure Hunt. The weather was kind and everybody had a lovely time.

### ***New projects:***

As we can't meet for the usual wonderful Kemplah meal we are starting some 'Meal Deliveries' initially to some of our Kemplah regulars but if there is demand this might increase to others – this will be on Wednesdays and will hopefully be starting in the next few weeks. Some other possibilities of Bubble get-togethers are also being considered but that will depend on Government policy/plans.

This month we start running some 1-1 Job advice/Finance support sessions, by appointment to begin with, and we are also hoping we might be able to have a small job club as things progress – these will be in a new room we are renting in Sunnyfield House and will hopefully provide much needed help at this challenging time.

Bridge2Parents face-to-face meetings have started back on a small socially distant basis although we have been touching base online during this time.

Monthly craft and story packs/October events for our Feast of Fun cohort and some have signed up for our new 'after school' homework groups that will begin when we feel it is appropriate to start.

Bridge2Youth – as we have no regular space available to meet [the 25 core members couldn't all safely attend in a building] we decide to try a few new things with one major option using the Minibus that GCF have kindly donated to us for our use. We have had 3 mobile sessions at Kind George V playing field, where we will take some hot chocolate/chat and some activities

along, and have already seen 25 young engage with us despite some damp and cool evenings. 😊

Obviously we have not been able to meet for our monthly prayer breakfasts but we know you have all been praying as we have felt incredibly supported – please keep praying and hopefully we can organise a prayer event in the autumn ... maybe via Zoom but please do pray about our work and the staff, volunteers and clients at this time 😊

We also are planning for the AGM online at the end of November - details will come out soon but if anybody struggles online we will have reports out early and time for feedback/tailed questions.

**Guisborough Directory:** In August a *Guisborough Community Directory* was launched serving a total of 10,000 houses in the area. This publication has articles about events and organisations in Guisborough funded by local business advertisements. The editorial team will be happy to give our church space to tell the public about our Church Christian fellowship. An excellent offer of free publicity.

God Bless us all. RT.