



Group News

Minister

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** February * 2007 * February **

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

Dear Friends,

How long has it been since Christmas? Months and months surely... or so it feels! But when you look back you realise that it wasn't so very long ago.

I have come to realise that we treat Christmas almost like most children these days treat yet another present at Christmas time. "Wow that's lovely!" "Great!" "Cool!" (or other more up to date young people's phrases) then as they swiftly put the present aside they just have to ask "Are there any more presents?!" "What's next?" We live in a society where new things become old very quickly, for once we have the longed for DVD player or wide screen television our thoughts move quickly on to the next longed for item - a new laptop or car! The new, as I said, is quickly forgotten, or rather soon becomes not as special as it was that first day the big cardboard box was carried ceremoniously into the house.

It is a bit of a shame that we don't spend longer simply marvelling over the helpless little baby, a miniature version of God, lying in the manger in the stable in Bethlehem. It is a shame we don't stay there a little longer, kneeling on the straw and reflecting on the enormity of just how vulnerable God was prepared to be, becoming a flesh and blood tiny little baby who was to rely on us, on humankind, for all his needs, for his very life. It is a shame that we move so swiftly on to epiphany and then, before we can blink, we are tossing pancakes in haste before we begin our reflective journey through Lent and on to Easter.

So it is possible, before we reach Ash Wednesday and embark upon our Lenten journeys, to sing just one more carol to ourselves, to think once more of the baby and the small boy, Jesus, and to remind ourselves of our vulnerable and awesome God, veiled in flesh, the flesh of a new born baby. For it was into this baby's blood warmed flesh that some time later the nails were hammered...

'Unto us a child is born...'

Catey.

Manse Prayers

Tuesday, 6 February	Marton
Tuesday, 13 February	Guisborough
Tuesday, 20 February	Marton
Tuesday, 27 February	Guisborough
Tuesday, 6 March	Marton

Manse Prayers are open to all. They begin at 8.00am and are held at Marton (10 Farington Drive) and Guisborough (31 Oakley Close)

For Our Prayers

Northern Synod – Prayer Cycle for February

- 1 Alnwick, St James's
- 2 Amble, St Mark's
- 3 Felton United Reformed Church
- 4 Longframlington United Reformed Church
- 5 Branton and Glanton United Reformed Church
- 6 Thropton United Reformed Church
- 7 Rothbury United Reformed Church. Rev Carla Hall's birthday.
- 8 Pray for preparations for Northern Synod's March meeting
- 9 Rev Graham Carter (Chair of Darlington Methodist District and President of Conference)
- 10 Rev Leo Osborn (Chair of Newcastle Methodist District)
- 11 Lay Preachers in mid-Northumberland -Eric Brown, Janet Purvis
- 12 Rev Gordon Connacher's retirement birthday
- 13 Commitment For Life advocates
- 14 We give thanks for all the love we receive, and those who need more love in their lives
- 15 The work of the Ecumenical Committee is long-term and often both complex and delicate
- 16 People involved in youth work in our churches
- 17 Rev Janet Appleby's birthday.
- 18 Those who staff our local church creches
- 19 Men and women who voluntarily maintain the fabric of our churches
- 20 Rev Val Towler's birthday
- 21 For all Lent groups meeting in the coming weeks
- 22 Church cleaners and caretakers
- 23 Those churches who are worrying about finding the resources they need
- 24 All working with young children in local congregations
- 25 The housebound and all unable to worship with their local church
- 26 The adoption of Good Practice by all involved across our local churches
- 27 Church magazine editors
- 28 The Mid-Northumberland Mission Partnership

Please encourage the use of this cycle of prayer within your church's worship and by the individual members of the congregation

Pray for **Rev Rowena Francis**, our recently inducted Synod Moderator, and her husband Alan Hinton as they settle into life in the North East. Alan is originally from Middlesbrough, so for him, this is a homecoming.

Please also pray for the neighbourhood in which your church is set

Count Your Treasures

Count you garden by the flowers,
Never by the leaves that fall;
Count your days by golden hours...
Don't remember clouds at all.
*Count your nights by stars, not shadows,
Count your life by smiles, not tears;
And with joy on every birthday,
Count your age by friends, not years.*

Anonymous

GRASS ROOTS 2007 Programme

A group committed to reducing our impact on the environment

- | | |
|---|---|
| Saturday
10 th February
9.30 am | VISIT – Conducted tour of Sita Energy from Waste plant, Haverton Hill Road (A1046) Billingham with Jon Westwick & adjoining Recycle Centre |
| Thursday
1 st March
10.30 am to 3 pm | TASK – Winter pruning of apple trees at Nature's World orchard. Instruction available. Snack Lunch in tea-room. Please bring gloves, secateurs, loppers, making sure that they are easily identifiable. |
| Wednesday
16 th May
7 for 7.30 pm | SPEAKER – Dr Mark Fishpool of Environmental City – Presentation on Climate Change at Natures World, Ladgate Lane, Middlesbrough.
Bring your questions |
| Saturday
8 th September
10.30 am to 3.30pm | TASK – at Clow Beck Eco Educational Centre, Croft, Darlington.
(To arrange shared transport from Guisborough/Stokesley areas call 01642701832. From Middlesbrough/Stockton areas call 01642 313977) |
| Saturday
24 th November
10.30 am | OPEN FORUM – Have your say at Natures World. An opportunity to share news, tips, discoveries, ideas, contacts. Structure planning for 2008 (with apple tarts? – harvest of March pruning.) |
| Friday
7 th December
12 noon | (tbc) CHRISTMAS LUNCH at Natures World tea-room. |

Redcar

Redcar Fellowship

At the Fellowship meeting held on 22nd November, and interesting talk was given by David Shearer on various types of wood; that is, hardwood such as oak and walnut, and soft woods such as pine and larch, and their uses in the building, construction and wood carving. Mr Shearer, whose hobby is woodcarving, has produced a number of beautiful models ranging from small animals and human figures up to large rocking horses for their grandchildren. He showed us some of the smaller models he has carved.

He has also presented the church with twelve

models representing people and animals depicting the Nativity, which stand on the communion table during Advent.

During 2006 the Fellowship raised £76.64 for Zoe's Place. Congratulations and thank you.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 28th March 2007 at 7.00pm. Please make every effort to attend. Accounts and reports must be with Mrs Anne Davis by Sunday 25th February at the latest for typing and copying.

Women's World Day of Prayer

This year, the service for the Women's World Day of Prayer is written and created by the people of Paraguay. Each year the service is produced by a different country and each year throughout the world, women of many nationalities and creeds enjoy worship on the same day, using the same worship sheet, thinking and praying for the people of the country chosen.

Paraguay is a poor country, but most interesting. Why not come along to a service near you and hear more of their way of life. There is a choice of venue and time:

Friday 2nd March ~ 2.30pm

Coatham Church

Speaker ~ Mrs Newman

Friday 2nd March ~ 7.00pm

Zetland Park Methodist Church

Speaker ~ Rev Rachel Harrison

Please come to support the "Interdenominational Women's Day of Prayer" - joining in worship with women throughout the world - thinking and praying with the people of Paraguay in world wide Christian unity. I'm sure you'll enjoy it.

Envelopes for weekly offerings

If you would like to have weekly envelopes for your Church offering, please contact Mrs Marcia Shearer who will be only too pleased to let you have some.

Commitment For Life

Envelopes will be available in Church on 11th and 18th February, for any donations you may wish to give to our partner in Commitment for Life. Thank you.

The Visitor

God dwells here
Within this quiet room;
His touch is on my posies
Of violets and broom.
And as the evening sunshine
Sheds around its golden store,
God lingers in the gentle beams
That slant across the floor.
I come here tired and weary
When day is nearly done;
God comes here in the evening,
As I watch the dying sun.
He stays with me a little while
And soothes my troubled heart;
He smells my sprigs of jasmine,
Then silently departs.
And yet He always stays here,
Within my quiet room;
They told so themselves, you see,
My violets and broom.

Margaret Mills

Thank you

The Christmas Dinner in December, raised £240 for Church Funds. Many thanks to Marcia and friends who arranged everything so well.

Redcar Calendar

Wed 28-Feb 7.00pm Elders Meeting

Weekly

Thursday 9.30am Prayers

10.00-11.30am Pop-in Centre

Linthorpe

From Moyra Gilmour

Many thanks for all the cards and cash gifts given to me for my 80th birthday. I shall take some time to ponder what I'll spend it on!!

Your performances on and off the floor at the party gave me great pleasure and you all looked so happy to hear the music of the Jumping Jack Ceilidh Band.

Donations for Coffee After Worship

Dec 24th 2006 – Guide Dogs For The Blind
£12.75 – John & Peggy Horbury

Jan 1st 2007 – MacMillan Nurses
£11.50 – Helen Ketlewell

Thank you to all who stay behind for fellowship and give so generously.

Another 'Thank You.'

I am now officially old!! It must be so because I received my first invitation to the Scouts' Senior Citizens party!

January 6th was the date and Linthorpe church hall was the venue. This party is an annual event and the tradition goes back many years. During Advent, the young people in our uniformed organisations run a postal service for Christmas cards from and for the church family within the Middlesbrough boundary; stamps cost 20p each and the young people deliver them by hand. The money raised goes towards funding the party.

As I say, this was my first...and what a great time I had. Not just me, of course, but all those who went.

The food was lovely and served with a smile... and there were plenty of cups of tea too...our cups were never allowed to remain empty!

After the food came the entertainment...and I

must say that I've never heard jokes from crackers delivered with such aplomb! Take a bow Harry!

The young people themselves excelled with a selection of sketches, songs and dance, - revealing a great deal of real talent amongst the cast.

We played games too...and the laughter never seemed to stop.

When we finally went home it was at the end of an evening of non-stop enjoyment...I have to say, - didn't expect getting older to be so much fun...!!!

Credit Union

Don't forget, the Credit Union is open every Tuesday: 12.30 – 1.30 & 5.15 – 6.15, with a Drop-In during the lunch time collection, where tea, coffee and biscuits are served.

Church Rotas

	Vestry	Porch	Readers	Flowers
Feb 4 th	R Harris	A Piercy	P Bradley	V Vij
Feb 11 th	J Haverson	S Mapplebeck & C Tovey	Parade	TBA
Feb 18 th	J Harper	G Dodds	M Warren	G Williams
Feb 25 th	M Gilmour	M Tilley	M Gilmour	TBA

Guisborough

Before I go any further, may I wish you all every blessing for the New Year 2007.

I know for some, last year was not a particularly easy one. Our Church teaches that God is always with us throughout, but some things test your faith.

Just before Christmas Day, our children and their hardworking and valuable teachers gave us a delightful rendering of the Nativity Story. And no matter which children turned up on the day there was a part for everyone, a piece of tinsel or a towel to wear. So no one was left out. In the weeks before the children (and teachers) had been making simple small Christmas decorations for sale. They earned sufficient to buy at least three goats for the Third World. What a wonderful effort! They should all be congratulated.

The New Year came in very wild and woolly. I hope this is not a portent for the coming year. Not just for ourselves, but across the world. And not just the weather either, but for the whole of life. Watching the TV news is sometimes not very reassuring. It needs all the Faith we can muster.

Perhaps the fact that we are coming up to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a good start. I've always felt that peace starts at home, each and every home; and radiates out. Into our community, our country and across the world. So let's all try it.

A quote I heard over the holidays, "A stranger is just a friend we've yet to meet". A nice thought.

As the days grow lighter and longer may our hearts grow lighter. And more willing and alert to listen to God's Word.

Maureen Houston

Guisborough Rotas

Date	Vestry	Communion Door	Flowers
04-Feb	M Baird	M Houston	J Reynolds D Collins
11-Feb	J Basham		R Tunncliffe H Senior
18-Feb	B Ward		D Moore M Baird
25-Feb	M Burrows		G Jordan J Reynolds

Guisborough Calendar

Sat	3 Feb	8.00am	Prayer Breakfast – at the Methodist Church.
Sat	10 Feb	10 – 12 noon	Farmers' Market – Church Open Day. Volunteers welcome.
Thu	15 Feb	7.00pm	Elders Meeting
Sun	18 Feb	10.00am	Guiz Kids – Guisbro' Churches JC's joining together at Prior Purselove Sports Centre.

Weekly

Tuesdays	12noon	Bible Study
Thursdays	9.30am – 11.45am	Coffee Morning
Thursdays	11.30am	Prayers and reflections with Catey, Meg, Ken and some of us

Guisborough Bridge Association Youth Drop In Centre

The Guisborough Bridge Association was formed to enable churches in the town to engage more closely with the local community. This has been done, for more than six years, by a series of initiatives and projects targeting different areas of need. Youth work has been an important area of concern – as the Association has sought to find ways of giving direction and purpose to various disengaged young people in the town.

The first significant project was the Church Army Bus, which was stationed on the King George V Playing Field in the north part of Guisborough, as a 'Drop in Centre' for the many young people who frequented this area. The activities took place each Monday – but after an initial period of success problems arose when numbers of visitors increased to a level where the facilities were unable to cope. So after several experiences of seriously bad behaviour, from some children, the project was suspended in the summer of 2004.

After some time it became evident that it would be impractical to re-start the Bus Project and a lengthy delay followed before a new initiative eventually emerged to open up a new Drop in Centre. This was to be in the Spotlight Studio above Lynne's Bakery, Westgate – a centrally

placed location in the high street. The club was opened on Monday, 16th, January 2006 under the Leadership of Rob Gowling, of the Methodist Church, supported by volunteers from churches in the town. Our earlier experience had shown us that, to be effective, we needed to restrict the numbers attending, limit the age range to secondary school children and ensure that there were more than enough leaders to control the situation. This meant that for the first six months, or so, we could only manage to open once a fortnight.

An important aim in our work was to make contact with those young people often found hanging around the town centre – with no obvious purpose or place to go. On our first day we had one boy and a lot of leaders. No doubt he was somewhat overwhelmed and puzzled by all the attention he attracted. However, he did return, and in the following months numbers slowly increased until we had six regulars – with others making fleeting visits to see what we were all about. Our activities, at this time, were of an informal nature – with boys and girls playing the usual indoor games such as; pool, darts, bowls – with various board and commuter games included. Crucial to our work was the relationships developed between the leaders and the young people. This knowledge and understanding was a vital tool in the development of the project so that leaders be able to find activities appropriate to their needs and wishes – and so that over time we could make some expression of our Christian purpose to them.

In September it was decided to run the event on a weekly basis. The newly appointed Bridge Development Worker, Cathy Crabb, came into help us at this time and her enthusiastic approach and drive has added much to the range of activities we have been able to do.

An important change in club organisation was the introduction of an organised activity or topic. Such events were presented by individual leaders, in rotation, or invited guest speakers. Activities included: Quiz nights, indoor games competitions, banner making, dance, cooking and other subjects of interest. Club evenings now begin with a half hour free period followed by an organised event or topic which is ended with a short 'Thought for the Day or God Slot' before a final period of free activity.

Success

Whenever any man becomes... A great success in life... The chances are he owes a lot... To his beloved wife... He may not know it at the time... And very likely he... Is blinded by the brilliance of... His human vanity... But if he stops to analyse... The cause of his success... He soon discovers that his wife... Is half his happiness... And he observes how much she does... With counsel good and true... To help him win in everything... He undertakes to do... Because a wife knows how to take... Advantage of the breaks... And how to save her husband from... His troublesome mistakes.

James Metcalfe

The most popular organised activity was cooking. This was done in the Methodist Church kitchen – making Spaghetti Bolognese and eating the finished meal in an Italian setting. Trips out have been organised to Bowling at Teesside Park and rock climbing practice in the Laurence Jackson School Sports Centre. Surprisingly, whilst the latter event created great interest only four boys turned up on the day. The leaders were quite puzzled by this response – did some young people have second thoughts about the effort required or were scared of heights? We were never able to discern the underlying reason behind the excuses offered to us later.

The most challenging aspect of our work has been the so called ‘God Slot’. Originally set at the end of the evening – it now has a place immediately after the organised activity – when all the young people present listen to a ‘Thought of the Day’ on a Christian theme. The most important issue at this point is to present an idea in such a way that they are likely to listen and be fully engaged with what is being said. Such an objective is not always achieved – but when it is we often have an intelligent response – which is both encouraging and heartening for us all.

After a year in operation the ‘Drop In’ has a registered membership of around 50 – although we can only accommodate up to 15 people in the existing premises. There are still regular members to which can be added a significant group of casual visitors. This requires carefully monitored door-keeping to avoid any behavioural difficulties. Behaviour has been generally good – with relatively few difficulties or incidents. This has vindicated our preparation and planning and the dedication and commitment of the volunteer leaders.

Our experience so far has led us to believe that there is a need for an expansion of this work in the town. It is hoped that we may move to larger premises or develop this outreach in more than one location – so that we can tap into all areas of need. The most up to date initiatives, beginning in January this year, are a second ‘Drop In’ evening on Thursdays, at the Spotlight venue, and the opportunity to develop exciting new projects through the Redcar and Cleveland

Youth Service Youth Opportunity Fund. The aim of the fund is to involve young people in the identification of positive activities for themselves. Projects can be in areas of sport, culture, recreation and voluntary work. Such initiatives can be quite extensive - such as voluntary work abroad. The funding applications are for ideas and commitments from the young people themselves and they are responsible for processing their claims. The young people have responded well to this challenge – and we are hopeful that some ideas may be carried through to fruition.

All of these new plans are for the future – but in the present we can say that we have done well so far. However, at all times there is always one certain need – more volunteer leaders. It is upon such new help that any further work will be founded. So if you like young people, think the future is important and love a challenge – then we’d love to hear from you – or just turn up at Spotlight any Monday or Thursday at 7.00pm.

Ray Tunnicliffe, Guisborough URC.

Guisborough Choral Society
40th Anniversary Celebration

“40 Years On”

The Choir will sing music performed during the last 40 years concluding with the ‘Rutter Gloria’

Saturday 24th March 2007
7.30pm

The Methodist Church, Westgate

A reception for past and present members of the Society follows the concert.

Tickets £9 (£8 concessions, £1 under 19)

From: Guisborough Bookshop
Greensleeves Music Shop

St Andrew's

Golden Wedding

John and Shirley wish to thank those from the church family who contributed to the cow they are buying for a community in the developing world in thankfulness on their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Ladies Fellowship

We had a lovely evening 'Remembering Christmas' organised by Doreen at our first meeting of the new year on 10th January 2007.

We look forward to hearing Doreen again on Wednesday 7th February at 7.30pm when her talk will be 'A sojourn into Austria'.

Church Funds

Our annual Bazaar held on 25th November 2006 raised £402.50 for church funds. Also our Christmas Concert on 2nd December 2006 raised £140.00 for church funds. Many thanks to everyone for supporting these events.

Operation Christmas Child

Shoe Box Appeal

St Andrews, together with the Brownies and Guides who meet at our church, sent 50 completed boxes to this worthwhile charity. Many thanks to Shona for organising us and to Grant for dispatching all these boxes to the pick up point. Well done to everyone.

Women's World Day of Prayer

Annual service

Friday 2nd March 2007
7.30pm.

St Andrew's United Reformed Church

Refreshments after the service

All welcome

Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 5th March at 7.30pm. Could all reports be sent to me by Sunday 11th February.

Roger Wheeler

St Andrew's Calendar

Fri 2-Feb 7.30pm First Friday Prayers at St Bernadette's RC

Mon 5-Feb 7.30pm Elders Meeting

Weekly

Wednesday 9.30am Prayers

Friday 6.15pm Boys Brigade

Sunday After Worship Traid Craft Stall (Last Sunday in month)

Lingdale

Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to everyone who filled a shoebox or made a donation, and apologies for putting the wrong dates in Group News.

I took 18 shoe boxes to the drop off point and a further 6 were collected from church.

One of the suggested items that you can put in the boxes is a glove puppet, the charity publishes a pattern on it's web-site – there should be a copy of it with this Group News – so if there are any knitters out there who would like to donate to this year's appeal you've got a whole 9 months!

Susan

Lingdale Calendar

Wed 14 Feb 7.30pm Elders Meeting

Weekly

Wednesday 11.00 – 12noon Coffee
 12noon – 1.00am Soup & Roll

Lingdale Rotas

Date	Flowers
4th Feb	Mr A Thompson
11th Feb	Mrs M Saunders
18th Feb	Miss J Scarth
25th Feb	Mr T Waller
4th Mar	Miss S Griffiths

Preachers

	4-Feb	11-Feb	18-Feb	25-Feb	4-Mar
Marton	9.30am MartonWT	M Robb Parade	C Morrison	K Harris	C Morrison
	6.30pm				
Lintho	11.00am M Robb	M Robb Parade	J Harper Communion	M Robb	K Harris
	6.30pm				
Guisbo	9.30am K Harris Communion	C Morrison	M Robb	C Morrison	M Robb Communion
Redcar	11.00am C Morrison	C Morrison	M Robb Membership	C Milburn	J Harper Communion
Lingdale	6.00pm M Robb	K Harris Communion	M Robb	M Robb	C Morrison

Material for the March Magazine to church editors by Sunday 11th February please

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