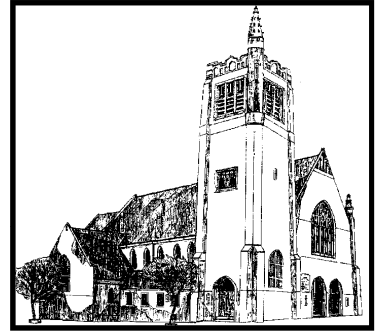


**Newsletter
of St. George's URC
Hartlepool
Feb—March 2017**



When the carols
Have been stilled
When the star-topped tree
Has been taken down
When family and friends
Are gone home
When we are back to our schedules
THEN THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS BEGINS
To welcome the refugee
To heal a broken planet
To feed the hungry
To build bridges of trust
Not walls of fear
To share our gifts
To seek justice and peace
For all people
To bring Christ's light
To the world

Michael Dougharty

Dates for your Diaries

Feb 13th	Andy Lie at HGP&J meeting 7.30pm. All welcome
March 6th	Elders meeting
March 19th	Church AGM after worship
March 25th	World Church and Mission Coffee morning 10-noon
April 7th	Organ Concert

Churches Together

8am Prayer Meetings:

8 February	College of Further Education
22 February	Owton Manor Baptist Church
8 March	College of Further Education
22 March	10 Clarkson Court

Coffee Rota

FEBRUARY	-	5 th	-	Robert and Sheila Harrison, Val Rigg
		12 th	-	Service at Grange Road
		19 th	-	Chris and Cathie Eddowes, Brian Carter
		26 th	-	Will and Kaye Barlow, Moyra Mudd
MARCH	-	5 th	-	Rose Hastings, Margaret Welford, Sandra Hindmarch
		12 th	-	Gail, Tarryn and Ashley Hoad
		19 th	-	Margaret and Andrew Fraser, Val Rigg
		26 th	-	Paul and Gillian Rodgers, Brian Carter
APRIL	-	2 nd	-	Enid and Alistair Bushnell, Gillian Cartman
		9 th	-	Service at Grange Road
		16 th	-	Robert and Sheila Harrison, Moyra Mudd
		23 rd	-	Chris and Cathie Eddowes, Dick Fletcher
		30 th	-	Aileen and Frank Whittaker, Kevin Hoad



.Please make sure you are in Church early enough to set out the tea and coffee things and get everything ready before service starts. Please use Fair Trade goods. Tea, Coffee and Sugar are provided. Bring milk (2 litres)and biscuits.

If you cannot do your turn please swap with someone else on the list. There is no need to leave your seat before the end of the service to make tea and coffee. There is plenty of time for everyone to get to the hall area and the boiler is ready to use. We will be using a new filter coffee machine which needs to be prepared before the service and will be ready at the end of service. Ask if you're not sure.

The Cornerstone is open 6 days a week for your refreshment and for Traidcraft supplies, cards, books etc.
Call in for a real homemade welcome

LENT COURSE

A Lent Course will be held at 2.00pm at the Church of the Nazarene, Lowthian Road each Tuesday during Lent. The material to be used is the York Course.

More information regarding this and other events during Lent will be available nearer the time.

MEN'S FORUM

Breakfast with the Bishop of Berwick at the Duke of Cleveland at 9am on Saturday March 4.

PROJECT AFRICA



At the end of 2016 we had £404-67p in our 'Friends of Bethal Nursery School' and 'The Khanyisa Trust' fund. We have given £200 to each of these projects leaving us £4-75p to start 2017.

The total of our project fund now stands at £8-67p (this includes the £4-75). Details of our 2017 project will be given in our next Newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who is supporting us and please keep saving your coppers etc. Should I not be available to receive your coppers etc would you please pass them on to Bill or Janet.

Thank you Wyn Parkinson

Women's World Day of Prayer - Friday 3rd March.

This year we are only holding one service locally, so it would be lovely if we had a good turnout of people to make it a really worthwhile service. Do please try to come! It is at 2pm. at Seaton Carew Methodist Church, Station Lane, Seaton Carew. Moyra.

Thank You

I would like to thank all members of the church family who sent me Christmas/New Year greetings and also for my new home. I moved house just before Christmas and am settling in gradually in an apt in Hartfields Manor, Bishop Cuthbert. I am still to open a few cardboard boxes as I await the next visit of one of the family. It was good to be back at worship -thanks to the kindness of Margaret and Andrew Fraser. Mary Daniel

A big thank you to all who helped in any way at the Eldon Grove Academy's recent Christmas rehearsals and presentations held at our church. Thanks a lot. Brian.

Margaret, Paul, Kathryn, Ian and Debs would like to thank everyone for all their kind thoughts, prayers and support over the loss of Arnold. Also for the lovely flowers and cards we have received.

Thank you so very much for the cards, prayers, hugs and love I have received since my illness started. Please keep me in your prayers. God Bless you all George Parkinson

From the Church Secretary

I am still calling for nominations for elders. Please let me have them as soon as possible.

Annual reports not received by 12th February will not be able to be included in the book of reports. Those groups or organisations who have not already produced theirs please take note.



*Would you really not like the congregation to know how your group/ activity is going on?
Chris*

International Peace Light from Bethlehem

In 1984 the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, ORF, launched a Christmas campaign 'Light into Darkness' which was part of a large charitable relief mission - for children in need in Austria and abroad.

The campaign involved a young child travelling to Bethlehem to collect a flame from the "Eternal Flame" burning at the birthplace of Jesus Christ. The light is then flown to Austria for a "Service of Dedication".

The campaign grew throughout Austria and the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation wanted to spread the Light across Europe. The Austrian Scouts and Guides accepted this challenge and soon Scouts and Guides from across Europe were all involved.

At the "Service of Dedication" the flame is passed to delegates from across Europe who take it back, with a message of Peace, to their own countries for use at ecumenical services throughout the Continent.

In 1995 the Austrian Scouts challenged the United Kingdom Scouts and Guides to join the campaign and to get the Light to England, and hopefully further. Members of The Deep Sea Scout Fellowship, part of the UK Scout Association, based in Dover took up the challenge, and with co-operation from P&O Ferries and members of British Rail Scout Fellowship, successfully brought the Light across the Channel in time for Christmas. The Peace Light now covers all parts of the United Kingdom, travelling up to Scotland, across to Wales and over the Irish Sea to Northern Ireland and Eire.

Scouts and Guides throughout the UK have now taken the light on to churches, hospitals, old people homes, prisons, and places of public, cultural and political importance - to anybody that appreciates the significance of the "gift".

The light is now passed on to 30 European Countries and for the past few years, on to North America, Mexico and Canada.

In past years the light has been presented to Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis, Mikhail Gorbatschow, the former King Hussain of Jordan, EU President Romano Prodi and other member of the European parliament in Strasbourg and the UN Troops in Kosovo. The Light is also passed on to Ground Zero in the USA.

The UK Co-ordinators have received many stories of how the Light has united communities, healed broken families, brought comfort to the infirm and strength to those in trouble.

The peace message for 2016 is "Boldly Creating Peace".

I gladly received this light, on behalf of the family and friends of St. George's Church Hartlepool as a sign of our willingness to be the channels of peace, by our words and actions. May all those who accept this Light pass on that Peace.

This is the script read by Brian on Christmas Eve at the Candle light service



News from Margaret Messer

A very big thank you to everyone for donating their spare change to the Africa Project.

On behalf of Friends of Bethel Nursery School, I collected the marvellous sum of £200 from members of the church on Thursday 12th January 2017

The money will go towards buying workbooks in English for the children. It's so important that every young child in Nursery education (3-7 years) learns English. All lessons and formal examinations in The Gambia from Primary School onwards are taught in English. Although English is the official language of the country, the main spoken languages are Wolof and Mandinka. So without a knowledge and understanding of English a child starting Primary School is at a huge disadvantage.

I'll be going to The Gambia, later this month so I hope to put some photos of the nursery on the church notice board very soon.

Once again, thank you all so much for your generosity and support.

Margaret Messer, Chair Friends of Bethel Nursery School

You can look up what's going on by looking at the website www.fbns.org.uk

(The photo is of some of the Hobbies Group with the cheque for Margaret.)

Stop Press: Latest email from Margaret

Yes, we set off and returned all in the space of 24 hours! I'm now boasting about my day trip to The Gambia.

We were only in the country three hours (Tuesday 17th January) when we heard about the state of emergency and the FCO advice that only essential travel should be undertaken. The tour companies put their contingency plans into action and by noon the following day, Wednesday we were back on the bus to the airport to be repatriated.

The journey home was long but uneventful and I got back into my house Thursday teatime.

I'm pleased to say that the staff and pupils of the Nursery remained safe throughout. Every school closed on that Tuesday, but a lot of children had already fled with their parents even before the state of emergency was announced. Schools reopened yesterday but it'll be another week or so before all the children return home from their place of safety. Shops in Banjul have also reopened and food is now available to buy.

How the country will recover from all this remains to be seen. Hopefully it's a new era for Gambians, but as Jammeh fled the country with more than £9million the coffers are bare.

Tourist flights will resume this weekend so hopefully people with a booking will still go ahead and travel there.



Scenes from the
Nativity at St.
George's by the
young people and
friends

Alan Rodgers was born in Hartlepool in 1926, and grew up alongside his sisters, Connie, Margaret and Evelyn.

On leaving school, he began an apprenticeship as an electrical engineer. At the age of eighteen, Alan was called up for National Service with REME, the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. The war was coming to an end, so he was posted to Egypt, clearing minefields with the help of German POW's. Alan's skills in electronics were valuable as he maintained the radio communications on the tanks – not easy as the sand soon found its way into the works!



On returning home, Alan found pleasure in going swimming, but the greater delight came when he met there a pretty young girl – Miriam Shears, and his visits to the baths became more frequent.

They fell in love and were married here in St George's on 20th March 1954. After a honeymoon in Edinburgh they returned to their new home in Rugby Street. They had two sons – Geoff, born in January 1958 and Paul in April 1959.

Paul and Geoff remember happy times as Alan was a dad to have fun with: flying kites, trainspotting and playing on the beach. Both boys were bought their first real guitars by Alan when they turned 14.

Alan worked as a service engineer for Ed Taylor and was one of those wonderful people who not only delivered television sets, but came out to repair them too. He built a reel to reel tape recorder and recorded all the episodes of Thunderbirds so the family could enjoy listening back to them.

Alan was the first engineer in the north east to work on automatic washing machines and this involved travelling many miles. He was so proud of his first electronic calculator-he loved gadgets.

His Hotpoint van carried the family for outings and came in handy shifting things for church too. Alan was involved in the NALGO club, always being involved in entertainments and he played bowls for the Guild Bowling Club

He was a member of the Hartlepool Stage Society: He had started with WHODS and became a member of HODA. Always proud of his time on stage, the desire to be an actor was strong within him, and when he got a part as a waiter on stage at the Sunderland Empire – they could hardly get him off stage! Alan also loved puzzles and tricks – a real performer.

Being part of this church was a joy for Alan. He had been part of the Congregational Church, and became a scout leader in earlier days, was a Deacon, and also editor of the church newsletter for some time.

Alan was a member of Strathearn Lodge of Freemasons, and took office as Chaplain. He was twice the Chairman of Hartlepool Retired Men's Forum . He enjoyed doing talks and was always well prepared, using the latest technology and illustrations.

Alan was very creative – very artistic – and enjoyed woodwork. He drew and copied pictures for posters, and was a keen photographer, enjoying the beauty of creation, while his skills in technology helped to capture sights and sounds.

Eighteen years ago, Alan was devastated to lose his dear wife Miriam: They had shared so much together; holidays, ballroom dancing and a great love of music. But Alan was determined to carry on, and always tried to remain independent, using many interests they shared as a springboard to new experiences. Truly 'Side by Side' in all things.

Alan will be missed in St. George's —where will you find things at the Bazaar you didn't know existed?- and also for his lusty (and tuneful) singing of the hymns.

THE URC PAST CASE REVIEW PROCESS A TIME TO ACKNOWLEDGE PAST ABUSES, SHOW CHRISTIAN LOVE AND BUILD A STRONGER, SAFER CHURCH COMMUNITY

The United Reformed Church has set up a **Past Case Review** and is now inviting anyone with concerns about the behaviour or conduct of anyone affiliated with the URC since its formation in 1972 to raise them formally.

Why is this happening and what does it mean for us?

There is the highest level of public and political concern about past failings in the behaviour of national bodies which have resulted in past abuses being ignored or covered up. A number of high profile cases involved national figures in positions of authority or influence who were found guilty of abusing their power, authority or celebrity status (such as Jimmy Saville and Rolf Harris), in particular involving the abuse of women and young people.

The churches have recognised that they have ignored evidence about past abuses.

Some church leaders have been found guilty, including a Scottish Cardinal and a former Anglican Bishop of Lewes. The Pope has said that abuse of children was like "leprosy" infecting the Church, according to the Italian La Repubblica newspaper. Pope Francis has strengthened the Vatican's laws against child abuse and has sought forgiveness from the victims of sexual abuse by priests. Sadly, there have also been a few cases within the URC.

Concern about abuse is now widespread around the world and several countries have established public enquiries.

The UK government's *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse* is investigating a wide range of institutions including local authorities, the police, the armed forces, schools, churches and mosques to consider the extent to which State and non-State institutions have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation; to consider the steps which it is necessary for State and non-State institutions to take in order to protect children from such abuse in future; and to publish a report with recommendations.

All the UK churches are reviewing their own files and past practices concerning all forms of abuse. A consistent finding is that mistreatment is usually associated with abuse of power by people exercising authority. Examining these cases has therefore inevitably led churches to explore the ways in which power is used and abused within the church and, in particular, the concept of spiritual abuse, meaning the use of spiritual authority or The Bible by an ordained or lay church leader to coerce, intimidate or ill-treat people, not only physically but also emotionally and spiritually.

The URC has established a formal process to receive, evaluate and respond to any allegations involving ordained ministers and also lay church leaders. All churches are being asked to draw this to the attention of congregations. A brochure (explaining the process in detail) and a poster are available (www.urc.org.uk/past-case-review). A team of independent people will respond to the allegations and provide support to all involved.

What happens next?

Past and present members of local congregations are now being given the opportunity to raise any concerns about past physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual abuse.

If a disclosure is made in a local church context, the person who wishes to disclose will be put in touch with the Past Case Review team. There will be no pressure on people to disclose, but should they want to, there is a clear process in place which has been authorised by General Assembly.

If an issue of concern about past abuse is raised in a particular local congregation, this can provoke strong emotional reactions and upset. If it becomes public, there may be contrary opinions, shock, outrage, denial and deep hurt. We trust that God will guide us and grant us

wisdom, sensitivity and open minds as it progresses.

Anybody from our church who wishes to talk over a concern can speak with the Minister, their Elder or Safeguarding lead. You can also contact the Past Case Review team direct, no matter who you are or what your question, by sending an email to past-case.review@urc.org.uk.

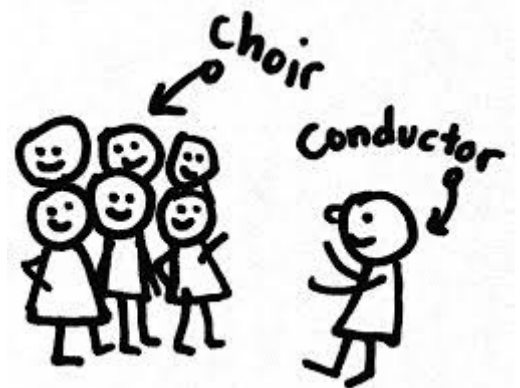
The URC and our own local church aim to be an open, respectful and trusted community, guided by Christian love and respecting the humanity of all involved. We know this does not work perfectly; people do get hurt in churches and serious abuse does happen. This process enables us to hear and respond to deep hurts, which may have been nursed for many years. The process of talking, listening respecting and apologising can be healing and should help us to be stronger communities.

The website is full of information and resources, including a wide range of counselling services: www.urc.org.uk/images/PCR/PCR-docs/Past-Case-Review-Brochure-10-09-2016.pdf.

We pray that as the process works its way through, we will see the love of God at work, that our churches will become safer spaces for worship and fellowship, and that we will be able to care for each other in Christian respect and compassion.

Concerts

The XHYC (ex Hartlepool Youth Choir) concert which was held on December 18th was an excellent concert enjoyed by all who attended. Another is in the early planning stages for December of this year to mark the 40th Anniversary of the choir singing in Manger Square and Jerusalem over Christmas.



Keep the date

Still in the planning stages, but this much is known so far:- April 7th will be an organ recital by Trevor Blease, organist of Stockton Parish Church. It will start at 7.30pm and there may be vocal contributions. Watch this space!



ZIMBABWE

Current statistics show that over 4 million people in Zimbabwe are food insecure as a result of the El Nino induced drought, especially as the peak of the hunger season sets in. Food is therefore the major priority for rural households at the moment, at the expense of some longer term programme work geared towards building long term resilience. This means projects such as gardening projects are being neglected due to both water shortages and households spending. Much time is spent looking for food.

The majority of crops planted during 2015/16 season were a complete write off. In Binga, where the programme is focussing on formal and informal education, drops in school attendances are being reported where there are no complimentary school feeding programmes. Unfortunately, the programme has not managed to get sufficient funding to integrate food assistance in all its areas of operation. The current emergency funding has been raised through the ACT Appeal process and is available up to the end of December 2016. So far only Insiza and Lupane districts are receiving assistance, reaching out to just over 8,000 individuals.

Christian Aid has noted that communities are resorting to negative and asset depleting coping strategies in the face of the ongoing food crisis. For example, where emergency interventions are providing cash for the purchase of both food and seeds, communities are tending only to buy food, and not think ahead to the importance of planting seeds for the next season.

Although not officially a failed state, Zimbabwe remains a country that is once again on the verge of total collapse. With extensive curbs in place on criticism or any attempts at political opposition, restrictions are in place to ensure no attempts are made to weaken the government's tight grip on power.

The economic outlook in Zimbabwe is currently gloomy, with prospects for recovery and stability currently looking bleak. The supply and availability of cash is progressively worsening, with people having to queue outside banks overnight in order to access their meagre salaries. When they do secure some cash, they are only allowed a maximum of \$50 per day, making life and business activities extremely challenging.

A message from Linda Mead who runs the Commitment for Life Programme

As this publication goes out to many churches I am hoping you can help me. I am looking for knitters or crocheters (individual or church craft groups) to do a project for the URC at Greenbelt, the Christian Art festival, in August. If you are such a person or know of a group, could you please email me at lmeadcforl@gmail.com as soon as possible. many thanks



Church Register

Baptism

4th December

Grayson Oliver Jackling - son of
Fiona and Andrew (grandson of Margaret Welford.)

Death

Rev. Arnold Dawson on 22nd Jan 2017



Hartlepool Global Peace and Justice Group
invite you to share

The Experiences of a Human Rights Observer



Andy spent 3 months on the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). He was based in Bethlehem and is now sharing his experience.

He will give a presentation and then answer questions

St George's URC, York Rd, Hartlepool

Monday 13th February 7.30pm

Refreshments afterwards

World Church and Mission Committee

invite you to

A Coffee Morning with stalls

Saturday 25th March 10am-noon

£1

News of People

We mourn the loss of Rev Arnold Dawson on January 22nd and assure Margaret, Paul, Kathryn, Ian and Debs and the rest of Arnold's family of our love and prayers at this sad time.

We remember who are not well enough to join us very often, particularly Valerie Waite, Margaret Goulding and Rita Jackson. Ethel Wray has been in hospital again. She is not out much at the moment, and would appreciate a chat on the phone.

We wish Robert Harrison who will be 70 on 17 March a very happy birthday.

Lewis has done it again winning a bronze medal in Iceland– the country, not the shop! Congratulations!



Flower Donors

Flower Donors

February 5	Mr and Mrs G Parkinson
February 12	
February 19	
February 26	Mr and Mrs F Whittaker
March 5	
March 12	Mrs M Goulding
March 19	Mr and Mrs A Woodhall
March 26	P Simpson



The Flower Ladies are arranging deliveries on each Sunday morning. If you would like to help on any particular day– just offer.

Stewards Rota

	Stewards	Keys	
February 5	Mrs E Bushnell	Mr A Bushnell	Mr F Whitaker
	Mr L Muldown	Mr P Humberston	
February 12	At Grange Road		
February 19	Mrs G Hoad	Miss A Hoad	Mr A Fraser
	Mr R Fletcher	Mr F Whitaker	
February 26	Mr K Hoad	Mr L Muldown	Mr A Bushnell
	Mr A Fraser	Mr P Humberston	
March 5	Mr A Bushnell	Mrs E Bushnell	Mr P Humberston
	Mr A Fraser	Mr R Fletcher	
March 12	Mrs G Hoad	Miss A Hoad	Mr F Whitaker
	Mr A Fraser	Mr K Hoad	
March 19	Mr A Bushnell	Mrs E Bushnell	Mr A Fraser
	Mr F Whitaker	Mr R Fletcher	
March 26	Mr K Hoad	Mr L Muldown	Mr W White
	Mr R Fletcher	Mr P Humberston	
April 2	Mr A Bushnell	Mrs E Bushnell	Mr P Humberston
	Mrs G Hoad	Miss A Hoad	

If you are unable to 'steward' a date, please ensure you arrange a substitute. The 'Stewards' and 'Keys' responsibilities are as per the 'DUTIES OF STEWARDS' document which has been issued to you.

Worship in St George's

February

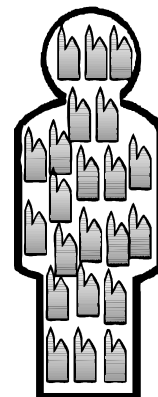
5th Ian Smith – Communion
 12th Grange road
 19th Dot Thompson
 26th Chris Eddowes

March

5th John Durrel -Communion
 12th Andy Lie
 19th Junior Church Worship Team
 26th Donna Moore

April

2nd Ruth Crofton – Communion.



Church Officers

MINISTER– vacancy
 CHURCH SECRETARY
 Mrs M Humberston 25 Belmont Gdns
 TS26 9LS tel 425847
 CHURCH TREASURER
 Mrs Sandra Twist, 17, Granville Ave
 tel 273447
 FREEWILL OFFERING TREASURER
 Mr W White 43 Grosmont Road Seaton Carew
 Hartlepool TS25 1EP tel. 280986
 HALL BOOKINGS STEWARD
 Mrs J White 43 Grosmont Road Seaton Carew
 Hartlepool TS25 1EP tel.: 280986

From the editor

Copy for the next issue to be with me by
 lunchtime **March 26th** please (or earlier)

Reach me by e-mail on:

chris.richard.eddowes @ntlworld.com

St George's Regular Activities

Sun 10.30am Family Worship
 Mon 2.00pm Monday Meeting at Grange
 Road
 6.00pm Beavers
 6.30pm Cub Scouts
 7.0pm Scouts
 3rd Tuesday in month Prayer meeting 11.00am
 Thur 10am Hobbies Club
 6.00pm Pilots



Church office

Mr P Humberston
 25 Belmont Gardens
 TS26 9LS
 (425847)

Newsletter Editor

Mrs C Eddowes
 65 Hutton Ave
 TS26 9PP
 (269412)



Communion Rota

Elders in bold please set up the Communion Table.
 Other elders please help to clear at the end

March **Andrew Fraser** **Brian Carter**
 Alan Woodhall Betty Woodhall
April **Sandra Twist** **May Ord**
 Moyra Mudd Chris Eddowes

Creche Rota

Feb	5	Mrs T Kirkpatrick	Mrs ES Welsh
	12	Mrs G Cartman	Mrs ES Welsh
	19	Mrs S Harrison	Mrs ES Welsh
	26	Mrs M Ord	Mrs T Kirkpatrick
Mar	5	Mrs G Cartman	Mrs ES Welsh
	12	Mrs S Harrison	Mrs ES Welsh
	19	Mrs T Kirkpatrick	Mrs ES Welsh
	26	Mrs M Ord	Mrs G Cartman
Apr	2	Mrs S Harrison	Mrs ES Welsh
	9	Mrs T Kirkpatrick	Mrs ES Welsh

Please arrange own substitute if unable to attend
 E S Welsh