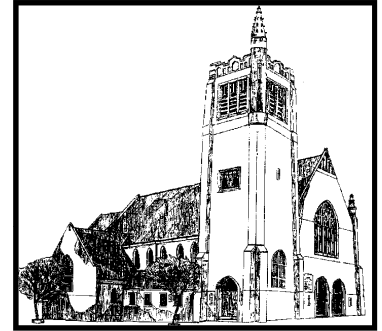




The
United
Reformed
Church

Newsletter of St. George's URC Hartlepool

Lockdown special June 2020



Hello

I hope you are all well and finding new and imaginative ways to keep occupied during these 'lockdown' times. I know some of you are quite frustrated at times about having to stay in and not getting together for church or the Hobbies group and all the other things you usually fill your time doing. We do hope and pray that it won't be for too much longer but our health is so important to us and we need to keep ourselves fit and healthy for when we can go out again.

One of the things I have been doing is playing my clarinet again. It has sat in the corner of the dining room in the Manse since we moved in over two years ago. Following some radical dental work I had found it difficult to play again but over the past few weeks I have quite enjoyed having some time to start again. Any of you who know about woodwind instruments will know that the clarinet has a reed, a fine sliver of wood to blow over the at create the sound. The thinner the wood the easier it is to play. I had to go on line and but the thinnest reeds available – beginners reeds, but I am gradually working my way back to the grown up reeds! I know there is someone else learning to play an instrument too so maybe there will be an opportunity for us to play together sometime!

Many of you now how important music is to us n our family. Alex plays a wide variety of instruments, and has been entertaining the neighbours every Thursday evening, playing his bagpipes in tribute to our keyworkers. Our daughter, Claire, plays the flute and was a wonderful alto voice and our son James plays piano, keyboard and trumpet and teaches music at a school in Ashington. He bought our grandson Jonah a baby percussion kit for his first birthday last month! There are many references to music and instruments in the bible – music used for many different occasions but my favourite is probably Psalm 150

Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Alex and I hope you are enjoying the variety of hymns we are using for worship each week – many familiar old hymns but it is good to hear some different ones and learn new songs to praise the Lord. If you have a favourite one you would like included in our mid week devotions, please do give me a ring or send me an email and tell me why it is important to you.

Go well – keep well and safe

God bless

Love

Sue



News of People etc.

Margaret Humberston heard recently from Alison, Mary Jones' daughter, that Mary died on Good Friday after a short illness and suspected COVID-19. Many of you will remember Mary, and of course her husband John, who was our Minister between 1984 and 1988. Alison says she knows Mary had very fond memories of her time in Hartlepool. Margaret visited Mary when she was at General Assembly in Cardiff, and they kept in touch ever since she moved from Hartlepool. She moved into a care home about 18 months ago as she was finding it difficult to manage at home

We need to remember Alison and her family in our prayers at this time.

(I always remember Mary as a lovely lady with a delightful, impish smile. I remember once wondering if I could get away with doing something different, possibly setting stuff out for Harvest. Mary said "Just do it and if anybody complains, tell them it's my fault. That's what minister's wives are for." Chris)

Someone else who will be sadly missed is Jean Lancaster of Grange Rd Methodists, who died recently. She will be missed by our members as she was always there at our monthly shared services, and particularly by members of the Monday Meeting. Jean did a wonderful job of arranging speakers and special events. She seemed indomitable and it was a shock when she died as she had seemed to be getting better. Her funeral was a double one with Francis, her husband, whose funeral she was arranging before she became ill. In these times, of course, only a few mourners were allowed but her funeral was broadcast on zoom— a strange experience. We remember all the family in our prayers at this awful time of losing both parents at the same time.

On a happier note Nancy Hall will be 80 on 6 July. Congratulations in advance and best wishes.

A note from Alan and May Ord: Our family would like to thank everyone for their prayers during Thomas' illness. Your support means a great deal to all of us. He is now recovering well. Blessings, May and Alan.

Dick Fletcher sends his love and best wishes to all at church. He and Margaret are well and being cared for lovingly at Charlotte Grange.

Christian Aid Week was different this year! Isn't everything? But thank you to all those who contributed

And last, but not least, thank you to Sue and Alex for their hard work producing weekly services (and mid weekly). It is much appreciated.



From this



to this one day soon we hope

ST. GEORGE'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ³
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Dear Friends

During this time when we are unable to go to church, we are missing a number of things that sustain us as Christians and sustain us as church communities.

We miss the human interaction we have with one another, the hug or the handshake, the smile and the care we receive week by week from our sisters and brothers in Christ.

We miss worshipping together, sitting with friends and sharing God's word together. We miss hymn singing and praying for and with one another. Some things we continue in our own homes, singing along to the CD or podcast each week, praying for one another and sometimes together over the phone, using our phones and email to ensure pastoral support continues.

Over the last few weeks a number of you have asked about financial giving to the church at this time, you are missing placing your offering in the plate each week. We want to encourage and support you in ways you can continue to give to the church to support its upkeep and ministry.

Stewardship is about the relationship between Christian living and Christian giving. It first acknowledges that all we have comes from God, and then poses the question: how do we respond and use God's gifts to help achieve God's purposes of love?

Giving and generosity are vital issues for churches and congregations to consider. Obviously, money that is given provides resources for the work of the Church. Generous Christian lifestyles also touch others with the overflowing generosity of God. Our responsibilities such as insuring and maintaining our buildings, and paying into the URC Maintenance of the Ministry fund continue even when we do not meet.

Even when economic times are challenging we are still blessed with God's bounty in many ways. People give in different ways to their church, and think differently about how much to give. A significant number of those who attend church contribute to the plate collection. Currently this is not possible, and the church is missing out on this valuable source of income. If you normally give in this way, we encourage you to think about how you might continue to give.

One way is to send Sandra Twist a cheque each month for the equivalent of your usual weekly offering.

Another is to set up a standing order with your bank to pay money directly from your personal account into the Church account

(continued overleaf)

Tax efficient giving –

As most you will know, Gift Aid is a tax relief scheme enabling UK tax payers to make tax efficient donations to charities, including churches, by completing a simple declaration. If you're a UK taxpayer, Gift Aid increases the value of your giving by 25% because it enables churches to reclaim the basic rate of tax on your gift at no extra cost to you. If you are a taxpayer the Church encourages you to use the Gift Aid scheme! If you are able to Gift Aid your regular offerings, please speak to Sandra as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please do get in touch with me or Sandra Twist – our contact details are at the top of this letter.

The bank account details for St George's United Reformed Church are as follows;

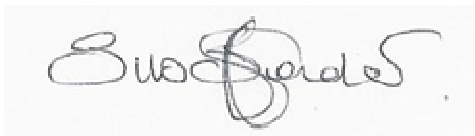
Account name	St. George's URC
Account number	50492642
Sort code	08-90-51

1 Chronicles 29. 10-14 David's Praise to God

Then David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly; David said: 'Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our ancestor Israel, for ever and ever. Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Riches and honour come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might; and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all. And now, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your glorious name.

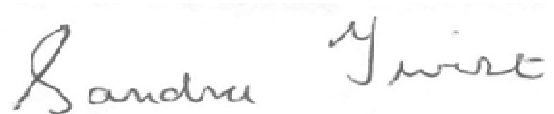
'But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to make this freewill-offering? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.

All good wishes



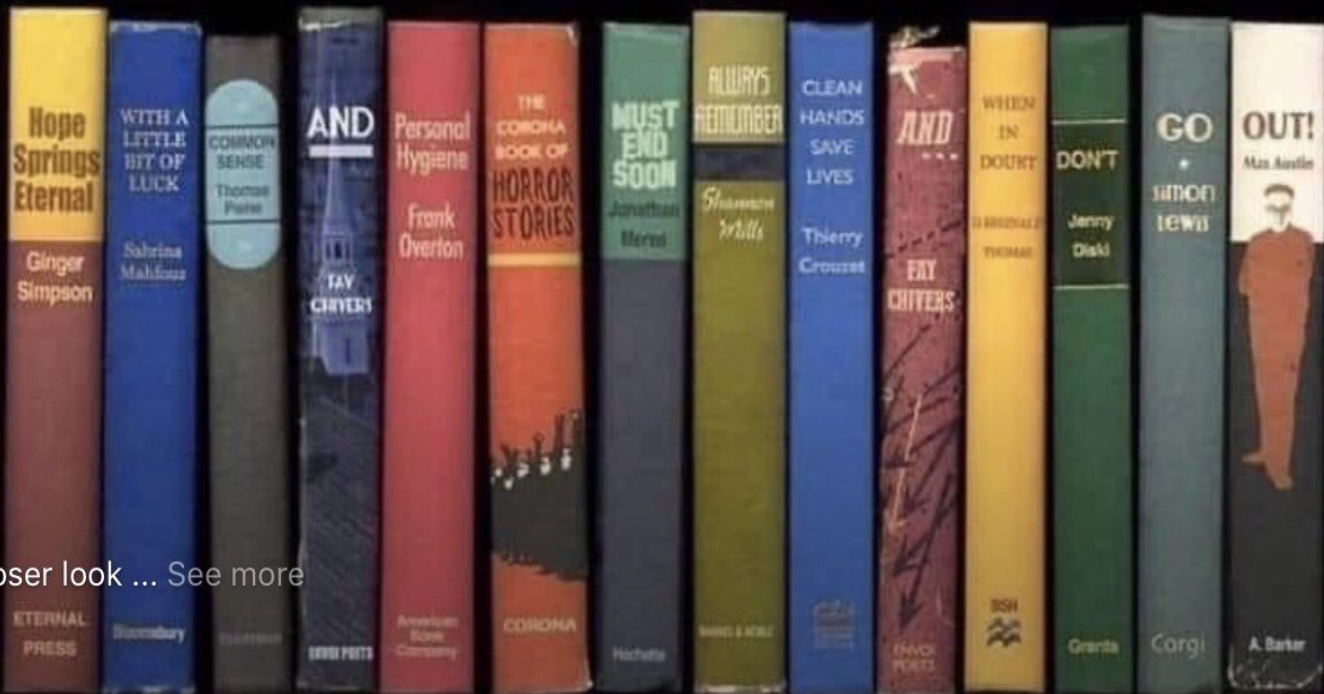
Susan J Fender

Minister




Sandra Twist

Church Treasurer



a closer look ... See more

 Share

A book shelf for our times

From the Editor,

It's strange to be producing the stripped down version of a newsletter. No rotas, no reports and not a lot of news. The Buddy system seems to be working quite well and keeping people informed and the grape vine hasn't withered at the root!

How are you doing? All the drawers tidied and everything clean for the visitors who are not yet allowed to come? Except perhaps for in the garden. These at least are looking very well. Ours has never been so advanced; there are even decent-sized strawberries. All we need now is a return of the sun now we had some rain.

I can't say I've done much— still allergic to housework. I have, however, painted on walls for the first time in ages. This time it's the Clangers (remember them?) in the boys' room, ready for when they can stop with us again. Richard did the boring bit of painting the base colour on the walls and then I did my graffiti. I'm not sure I've done any since the view of Lindisfarne from the Minister's vestry false window. Oh, and I've nearly finished the jumper I've been knitting for two years.

In the glorious mornings of the past few weeks I've been reminded of a hymn that used to be in the hymn book we used "in the olden days". I could never understand its inclusion as I couldn't see it had much to do with God, more the Protestant Work Ethic. The Hymn starts "*So here hath been dawning another blue day. Think, wilt thou let it slip useless away?*". To which the answer from me is "Probably, yes."

I've done a lot of nothing except feed my innate idleness, but part of me will be glad to get back to the things I used to spend so much time doing— or possibly not....

Perhaps we should take this time as R and R, ready to get cracking again when we are allowed to. Of course this doesn't stop us doing those random acts of kindness while we wait. I know so many people have enjoyed these, all the more so that they were unexpected— and it's always nice to know somebody has thought especially of you.

I don't know when the next edition will be but send me news and I might shake off the lethargy and do another.

Keep safe and cheerful.

Chris

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