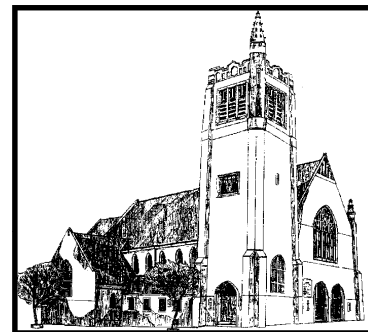




Newsletter of St. George's URC Hartlepool

**Lockdown special
April-May 2021**



Dear All

Endings and goodbyes are never easy, and as I write this letter Alex and I are beginning the task of packing up the Manse and preparing for our move. Lockdown has meant that the way we do many things have changed, not least seeking and receiving a new call.

I will be taking my last service with you on Sunday 25th April via Zoom and we will be moving to Melbourn, Cambridgeshire on Tuesday 11th/Wednesday 12th May.

So many of us have had to engage with the wonders of technology more and more over the last twelve months. We have quite a good number attending our Zoom services each week, many more listening in to the Podcast and still more receiving the weekly service on a CD through the post.

I know from the comments I have had that they have received a mixed response. We have not yet identified how worship might continue to be provided after I have left the pastorate but if you feel you have the skills or would like to learn how to reproduce the URC service each week for those unable to come to church, please do get in touch with me and Alex and I would be happy to show you how it is done.

We do hope that by Mid June churches will be fully open again for Sunday worship and that many of the weekly activities can resume. Care will still need to be taken. Hand Sanitising and good cleaning practices will still be very necessary, but I would hope that handshaking and a few hugs might be on the card too. However, we do need to remember that we will not be 'going back' in every sense of the word. We have changed – all of us, in some way or another by the events of the last year.

As we approach Holy Week and Easter, I cannot but help reflect on how one week changed the world forever. Of course, all that had gone before in the life of Jesus is significant too, just as our lives, pre-pandemic are significant to us. But the events of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the stillness of Easter Saturday and the glorious resurrection on Easter Day are days that changed the world forever.

We are Easter People.

Our hope, faith and trust are embedded into the Easter story. This year has been challenging for all of us. We have lived through really difficult days and for me what seems like a never-ending Easter Saturday of watching and waiting, of mourning and at times complete desolation. However, all these days have been lived in the knowledge and hope of the Easter story and all the love, joy, peace and promise that that brings.

So, as I leave you, my prayer is that you will find in the Easter story, all that you need to carry you into the next chapter of your stories and that God continues to bless you as his people in this place.

Go well

With love

Sue

News of People

Aileen has now started her chemotherapy for bowel cancer. She and Frank remain very much in our thoughts and prayers.

We also continue to keep Bill and Janet in our prayers.

The changes in the regulations governing visitor to care homes mean that Dick and Margaret can meet up again with a family member in their rooms, but unfortunately not yet with each other. Dick sends his love and thanks to all those people thinking of and praying for them.

_____ Gillian Burgon will be 60 on 2 May. (a really good day for a birthday, if I may say so! Chris) Congratulations, Gillian.

Going Forward

I'm sure by now most of you will be aware that our minister, Rev Sue Fender, has accepted a call to a group of churches in Cambridgeshire. Sue will be with us for the AGM and her final service in the pastorate will be Sunday 25 April 2021. This service will be held on Zoom.

I'm sure you would all like me to thank Sue for her ministry here in Hartlepool while she has been the minister for our group. As we say farewell, we wish her and Alex well as they move into their new home and the next phase of Sue's ministry.

Re-opening for face to face Worship

The elders have been discussing the possibility of opening the church again for face to face worship. We meet again on Thursday 8 April when we hope to be able to finalise the date, which may well be Pentecost Sunday. Once a decision has been made about the date we will re-open, we will let everybody know.



The Journey through Holy Week begins

Nominations and AGM

At this time of year I usually seek nominations for Elders, this year is no exception. If you would like to nominate someone, please speak to the person and then try to find somebody to second the nomination. Once you have done this, please send the details of your nomination with your name, and whoever has seconded the nomination, to me as soon as possible.

We now have a date for the AGM. This will be on Sunday 11 April 2021 at 2.30pm. As stated in the previous newsletter, this will take place via Zoom. A copy of the Annual Reports and Annual Accounts will be sent out to everybody either by email or in the post prior to the meeting taking place.

If you think you will be unable to join the Zoom AGM, but wish to contribute something to the meeting, please let me know as soon as possible so that I can arrange for the comments to be made at the meeting on your behalf.

Safeguarding Training Courses

For the last few years the URC has used the Methodist Safeguarding Training, but has now developed its own version.

It is hoped that as many people as possible, and not just the Elders, will take the opportunity to learn more about safeguarding in our churches.

The Safeguarding Officer for our Synod has planned a series of ZOOM training sessions, the dates of which are given below.

Thursday 8 April 2021	10am to 12pm
Monday 26 April 2021	1pm to 3pm
Wednesday 5 May 2021	10am to 12pm

If you would like to sign up for some training can you please contact me: wendy.watson@urc-northernsynod.org



The Knitted Bible

Who would have thought that the knitted bible would be stranded for a full 12 months in Bolton. Now that restrictions are being eased then the time is coming for a trip to Lancashire to collect the exhibition before it resumes its travels around the UK. Before Easter last year we invited local knitters and crafters to help us create a new 'community' scene for the display. The feeding of the 4000 was agreed and figures began to appear along with a beautifully crafted boat complete with sails and fishing nets. The finished scene is pictured below ready to add to the exhibition when it ventures off to Easingwold at the end of June. We will be looking for volunteers to do a little TLC when we have retrieved the scenes so watch this space.



As our Commitment to Life partner is Zimbabwe, you might like to join in the zoom celebration and news sharing from Christian Aid. link

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/93023982876?](https://zoom.us/j/93023982876?pwd=QIRhTStDcGhtQ29vWUMyYbFdWLys4Zz09)

[pwd=QIRhTStDcGhtQ29vWUMyYbFdWLys4Zz09](https://zoom.us/j/93023982876?pwd=QIRhTStDcGhtQ29vWUMyYbFdWLys4Zz09)

Meeting ID: 930 2398 2876

Passcode: 750863

One tap mobile

+442034815237,,93023982876# United Kingdom

The poster features a close-up of a smiling woman with dark skin, wearing a vibrant, multi-colored headscarf. The background is a solid blue. Overlaid on the image are several text elements in a playful, hand-drawn style. At the top, 'ZOOM to Zimbabwe' is written in large, red, outlined letters. Below this, on the left, is a red arrow pointing right with the words 'with christian aid' in white. On the right, the date '11th May' and the year '2021' are written in large, red, outlined letters, with '2 pm' below them. In the bottom left, the text 'Updates, Music, Food & Friendship' is written in a red, outlined font. In the bottom right, 'Hosted by' is written in a red, outlined font, followed by the 'Commitment for Life' logo at the very bottom right. A large red arrow points from the bottom left towards the center of the image.

ZOOM to Zimbabwe

with christian aid

11th May
2021
2 pm

Updates, Music,
Food & Friendship

Email Suzanne for link
suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk

Hosted by

Commitment
for Life

The Serenity Prayer

Most of you will know the Serenity Prayer, and find it useful, but here are two new versions which I found in Stranton's magazine

The New Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, which is pretty much everyone, Since I'm clearly not you, God.
At least not last time I checked.

And while you're at it, God, please give me the courage to change what I need to change about myself, which is frankly a lot, since, once again, I'm not you, which means I'm not perfect.

It's better for me to focus on changing myself than to worry about changing other people, Who, as you'll no doubt remember me saying, I can't change anyway.

Finally, give me the wisdom to just shut up whenever I think that I'm clearly smarter Than everyone else in the room, That no one knows what they're talking about Except me, or that I alone have all the answers.

Basically, God, grant me the wisdom to Remember that I'm not you.

Amen

By Fr James Martin SJ

The Other Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to stop beating myself for not doing things perfectly,
The courage to forgive myself because I'm working on doing better,
And the wisdom to know that you already love me the way I am.



Good Friday

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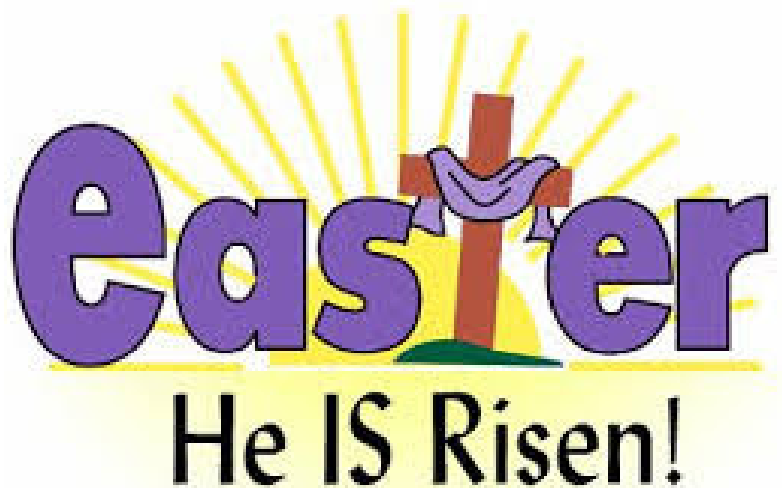
CHURCH TREASURER

Mrs Sandra Twist, 17, Granville Ave

tel 273447

FREEWILL OFFERING TREASURER

HALL BOOKINGS STEWARD



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I am hoping that we will need to produce an edition earlier than the usual one on the last Sunday in May so we can give you the latest news about re-opening. Watch this space! Ed.

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