

THE REVIEW

FEBRUARY 2021



**WADDINGTON STREET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH,
DURHAM CITY DH1 4BG**

Church Website: www.durhamurc.org.uk



Dear Friends,

It has been a pleasure to receive entries to the recent photography competition, and then choose which picture was best to put on the front cover of this issue.

The images from all who entered are, in their varied ways, beautiful—reminding us that even winter can be colourful if we look hard enough while out and about.

The winning imaging also spoke to me of hope: the fact that in winter there is still to be found the prospect of spring.

We need that message more than ever. As I write, another covering of snow is being drenched by freezing all-day rain, and the situation over the pond in the USA is chilling. But before we rush to the comforting warmth of spring, both meteorological and metaphorical, we need to recognise the need to dwell in winter.

The cold season is necessary. Icy frosts cleanse the ground. Rains and snowfalls soak the soil. Winds deal with deadwood. Winter prepares the earth to receive new life, just as the death of Jesus made His resurrection possible.

We are all in need of hope which springs forth, bringing new life to our weary world. It's tempting to jump to spring and resurrection. But first we'll need to wait in winter for a little while longer. We can be reassured by the signs of spring around us already. If we look closely and afresh at what is, we can see grace, colour, and hope—just as photographs have revealed to us the beauty apparent in winter months.

As the saying goes, waiting is not wasting. There's much preparatory work to be done, even in these times of restriction, uncertainty, and miserable weather. That work continues: to assist your elders I am pleased to welcome Val Hodgson and Richard Phua to the eldership, and to welcome Janet Sarsfield back.

The work of us all is to ask ourselves what in us needs to be rested, soaked and replenished; or frozen out, blown away and discarded. This is an ideal time to do just that, remembering that there is still beauty, colour and hope even in the present moment, this season of winter.

Regards

Marcus

Below: Ice on a Cold Car Bonnet by Marcus Paul Hargis.



Why, in God's name, are we here?

Talk of purpose and some would say that our purpose as a church is to “glorify God and to enjoy Him forever,” as one of the founding documents of the Reformed faith says. Of course we are here for God. However, the Westminster Catechism from our Presbyterian heritage needs further clarification for today: how are we to glorify God; where do we find joy now; what does it mean in practice to be ‘here for God’?

This article is a first step in asking these sort of questions with members, friends, and supporters of Waddington Street URC. Even your useful strapline, “*Called to be God's people, transformed by the Gospel, making a difference in today's world.*” leaves the door open to various interpretations. As Minister I came with the longer-term intention of exploring and clarifying with each of my churches their sense of purpose and the implications of this in practice. But with Waddington Street, the need is more pressing because of the ongoing discussion over recent sizable donations.

Legacies are a true blessing and the generous provision given to the church by Margot Waddle has already generated a wide range of suggestions. Arriving as your minister, I was given a document setting out the ideas. My first thought was that no particular direction clearly stood out and that further discussion would be needed... and then the restrictions of the pandemic put normal church life on hold.

But, as I say in my leading article, this is a good time for preparation and introspection as we ride (slide) through the winter months. So, this is an introduction, an initial asking of the question ‘*Why, in God's name, are we here?*’ From this will come further discernment, discussion, and a sense of direction to better inform decisions on utilising resources effectively.

We're here for God, of course, but what does that mean in reality? Some supplemental questions, linked to the strapline, might begin to tease out where we see our purpose in practice:-

- Remembering that buildings and activities ‘speak’ as loudly as our words, how are we communicating our love for God? (*Called to be God's people*)
- Given that the Spirit of Christ is the Way to True Life, what do we do that gives us energy? (*Transformed by the Gospel*)
- And where are we seeing beneficial changes? which are signs that we are *making a difference in today's world.*

Please do let us have your initial thoughts on these questions, directly to myself or to your elder (whatever you prefer). This will help us form a plan for Waddington Street to further discern its' purpose in practice, and make decisions accordingly. I pray that as we all think about the question a clear direction will emerge which will help us discern the way forward as God's people.

Marcus Hargis



Guide us Lord, in our thinking and in our praying,
That we may show Your influence in our lives,
By the way that we care for those in dire need,
And by our showing love and being welcoming,
To those who enter our Church or our lives.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen

L.T.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY AND CHURCH NEWS

Ministerial Services – Revd. Marcus Hargis is contactable in the following ways:-

Phone: 0776 949 2629 and 0191 366 4930 (messages can be left on either).

Email: marcushargis@outlook.com For routine pastoral matters, please first approach your Elder.

Time of Sunday Services – 10.45 a.m.

COPY DATE FOR THE MARCH REVIEW IS – SUNDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2021.

Please be aware when submitting articles that our Church Magazine goes on the website and is available for anyone anywhere in the world to read.

DATES OF CHURCH SERVICES AT WADDINGTON STREET

There will be no services at Waddington Street until further notice.

Details when available will be posted on the church website and by email.

Waddington Street Eldership

Last year, the Elders Meeting decided that they could do with additional numbers to provide the practical, spiritual and pastoral leadership needed during these times. The usual process would not be possible due to restrictions, and so we developed a way of seeking nominations and the views of church members. As a result, we are pleased to welcome Janet Sarsfield back onto the eldership, along with Richard Phua and Val Hodgson joining us as new elders.

The members have affirmed these three unanimously. We shall be holding a special Waddington Street Zoom service to ordain Val and Richard, and to induct all three. This we shall do when Janet Sarsfield has returned from France. Details to follow.



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT. 22nd February to 7th March 2021

For two weeks each year at the end of February thousands of individuals, companies and groups across the UK come together to share stories of the people who grow our food and drinks and grow the cotton used in our clothes. Some of the people mentioned are often exploited, underpaid and linked to modern day slavery.

FAIRTRADE Fortnight may seem difficult this year after the hard year in 2020 that we have all experienced. The Covid19 pandemic has also shown us more than ever how interconnected we are globally. However, the challenge for farmers continues with the added challenge of climate change causing drought, floods, fires – all resulting in poor crops and lower prices for their produce.

FAIRTRADE works to raise the voices of producers and prioritise what they need to respond to as the environmental crisis unfolds in already vulnerable communities.

This FAIRTRADE fortnight we are asked '**CHOOSE THE WORLD YOU WANT**'.

Use your voice to tell others about the challenges farmers and producers face from climate change. During FAIRTRADE fortnight, let us all think a bit more about what we buy and how it is produced and how much we take for granted.

There are some interesting links on the website: fairtrade.org.uk

Kath Ogilvie

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY AND CHURCH NEWS

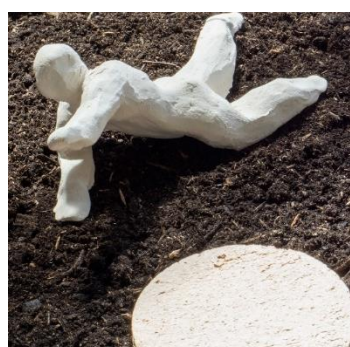


THANK YOU TO ALL.

A big thank you to everyone who has helped with the fundraising for our two charities, St. Cuthbert's Hospice and Christian Aid. Folks have been very generous and we have enjoyed the fun of quizzes, photograph competition, eating chocolate oranges (which raised £142) and just sending in donations. To date we have raised **£1280** and at the end of February I will ask our Treasurer, Michèle, to send our donations to the two charities. Future ideas for fundraising are always welcome. *Kath Ogilvie*

Juggling Jigsaws

As one of our fund raising activities, jigsaws from our collection can be taken and completed upon payment of a donation towards our nominated charities – St. Cuthbert's Hospice and Christian Aid. If interested, then phone or email me and I will ensure a jigsaw is delivered to your door. The jigsaws can either be returned to me when complete or passed on if desired. email jthornborrow@outlook.com or phone (0191) 384 3702



I shall be one of the exhibited artists at the BALTIC Open exhibition from 6 January – 6 June 2021.

Full details are at: www.baltic.art/baltic-open-submission

Viewing will be by free ticket and will of course depend on the local Covid alert situation at any given time.

My own work is an installation of ceramic figures on a foundation of compost and I attach an image showing a detail of the piece entitled 'Elements of/and/in Time'.

There are many ways to 'preach the Gospel at all times, use words if you must;', and conceptual art is one such subtle method. Over time I look

forward to sharing more of my ideas with you all.

Regards, Marcus



SMILE TIME!

ITALIAN MOTHER

Giuseppe excitedly tells his mother he's fallen in love and that he is going to get married.

He says, "Just for fun, Mama, I'm going to bring over three women and you try and guess which one I'm going to marry."

The mother agrees.

The next day, he brings three beautiful women into the house, sits them down on the couch and they chat for a while.

He then says, "Okay, Mama, guess which one am I going to marry?"

Mama says immediately, "The one on the right."

"That's amazing, Mama. You're right. How did you know?"

Mama replies: "I don't like her."



(With apologies to Italian Mamas)



Notes from Elders' Meeting on Wednesday 6th January 2021 (held on ZOOM on line)

- 1 Kathleen Ogilvie, (Chair) opened with Ephesians 3 verse 16 and a prayer by Rachel Poolman.
 2. The meeting received apologies from Ruth Cranfield and Janet Sarsfield. The minutes of the last meeting on 2 December 2020 were agreed and signed.
 3. Matters Arising from the last minutes on 2 December 2020 –
 - A – New Elders – elders having consulted the Church Members in their districts, reported a unanimous agreement to Janet, Val and Richard being appointed as Elders to our Church. Discussions to continue on the next step to induction under these unusual times.
 - B – Christmas appeal update – Donations of over £1000 have been received. An article giving fuller details will appear in the February Review. Entries for the photographic competition close in the middle of January. Marcus will judge and all fundraising updates will be in the Review.
 - C – Church Service arrangements during lock-down – The meeting agreed to stay closed until the end of February. Les to be advised for pulpit supply. Elders stressed the need to keep in touch and support each other and all our Church family at this time. We also discussed arrangements should Marcus be unable to oversee the weekly Zoom service. Val kindly offered to act as host.
 - D – Foodbank and Resource Centre – The meeting agreed to extend the present arrangements to the end of the next lock-down when we will review them. The Resource Centre has closed for now but the foodbank is still supporting customers.
 - E – ECO Church – We thought we would have had a small group in place by now to take things forward but circumstances have overtaken us. Helen offered to download forms from their website to check out what we can do to progress this.
 4. District reports were given and prayers offered.
 5. Correspondence – 2 items of correspondence received about Margot's legacy and fundraising were discussed and replies agreed. Replies to be sent by Janet and Sandy.
 6. Charity Fundraising – See 3 above. Full update and photo competition results to appear in February Review.
 7. Legacy – The meeting was advised that Donald Mackay had left the church £5,000 in his will. He also left the sum of £500 for the work of the Intergenerational link between Waddington Street Church and the students of Josephine Butler College. Donald really loved these evenings and meeting the young people. These 2 amounts have been received into Church funds.
 8. The URC annual return is due at the end of the month. Yvonne has completed the Safeguarding section and Sandy has kindly agreed to complete the rest. The meeting discussed DBS checks for new Elders and agreement was reached that all future office bearers would be DBS checked where required. Yvonne agreed to check who holds a valid check and update at the next meeting.
 9. The next meeting will be on line (ZOOM) on Wednesday 3 February 2021 at 7 p.m.
 10. The meeting closed with the saying of the Grace.
- (Yvonne Melville)

Dear Lord, guide us in our decision making,
 So that we willingly follow your teachings
 And are always aware of the effect we have on others.
 Make us sensitive to their needs and fears
 And help us to freely give comfort and support
 So that people know we are truly Your disciples.



EDITOR'S LETTER

DEAR READERS,

I would like to share with you this item from America, my favourites are 8, 10 and 12.

Here are 12 things to consider as we close the door on one of the most horrible years of our lifetime.

1. The dumbest thing I ever bought was a 2020 planner.
2. I was so bored I called Jake from State Farm just to talk to someone. He asked me what I was wearing.
3. 2019: Stay away from negative people. 2020: Stay away from positive people.
4. The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house and their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors!
5. This morning I saw a neighbour talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came into my house and told my dog. We laughed a lot.
6. Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pyjamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.
7. Does anyone know if we can take showers yet or should we just keep washing our hands?
8. This virus has done what no woman has been able to do.
Cancel sports, shut down all bars and keep men at home!
9. I never thought the comment, "I wouldn't touch him/her with a 6-foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!
10. I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.
11. I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to the Backyard. I'm getting tired of the Living Room.
12. Never in a million years could I have imagined I would go up to a bank teller wearing a mask and ask for money.

Les and I have been grateful for the distraction of television programmes, of reading, of talking with friends and family on the telephone, of doing mobility exercises indoors – especially on snowy or icy days, of doing jigsaws (when did they get so hard to solve?!), of having the use of our computer - and for the fact that we are both well – as are our family members.

One of the things we have missed most during lockdown was the ability to travel where and when we liked and we expect most people feel the same about that restriction of freedom, necessary though it has been. With the news that a vaccine will soon be available to our age-group we have felt hopeful enough to book some holidays later in the year and we sincerely hope our itchy feet will be soothed then! We feel so sorry for those whose weddings and other celebrations have all had to be cancelled or postponed. However, all of these things pale into insignificance in the face of those who have lost family or friends to Covid19 and we feel deep sympathy for them. We pray for an end to this pandemic. We have found the on-line Sunday services very helpful and it is interesting that in them, in the Lord's Prayer, we revert to the familiar scottish form of "forgive us our debts", instead of "forgive us our trespasses" – much easier to say!

We enjoyed a recent Songs of Praise which came partly from Stirling and the Church of the Holy Rude there, where James VI of Scotland was crowned, just down the road from Stirling Castle. It is the only Church outside of Westminster Abbey where a monarch was crowned in Britain.

My thanks to anyone who has contributed to this month's Review.

Lucille Thomson

The next issue of The Review will be published on **Sunday 7th March 2021**.
Contributions please to Lucille Thomson at church or BY POST or **Tel. 0191-3861052**
or e-mail **lesthomson@talktalk.net** – no later than **NOON on Sunday 21st February 2021**.

These charming photographs came from Heinz who visited with family in Germany.

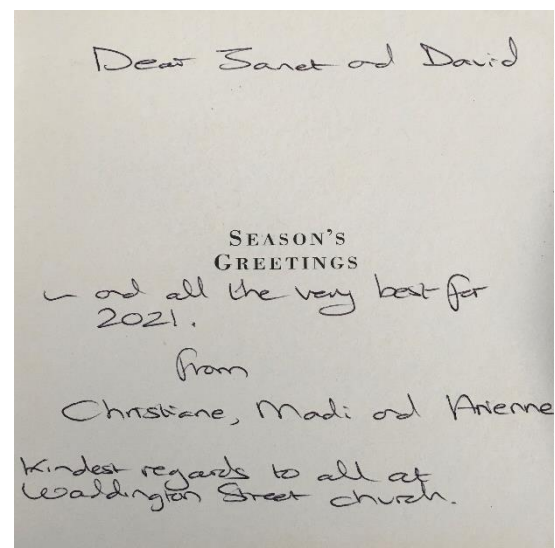


Left – Christmas Eve preparations, i.e. tree decorating.

Below – Christmas torch celebrations on Christmas Day – not traditional but very much enjoyed by Heinz's grandsons.



Janet and David Thornborrow kindly passed on this card from Christiane Mitchell and her daughters, Madi and Arienne.



The letter from Christiane's daughters is on the next page.

We are sending this note on behalf of our mother, Christiane, who has now been at a care home in Warwickshire near Madi for just over a year, and who has asked us to pass on her thoughts and kindest Christmas wishes to all her friends.

Mum has settled in well to her new surroundings and has a nice room on the ground floor, with a glass door and windows opening onto a patio area with views of the garden. As she has always loved plants we were really pleased that this room was available, and it is also large enough that we were able to bring a chest of drawers, two comfortable chairs and some lamps down from her house in Durham to make it more homely. The walls are also now adorned with some of the many paintings from her father, and we even managed to put some pictures up in the en-suite!

Prior to the first lockdown Madi was able to visit regularly, but then sadly was unable to do so at all until July, other than a special visit to celebrate Mum's milestone 80th birthday on 26 April - in a socially-distanced way! We were blessed with good weather on the day which enabled her 12-year old grandson Luke to play his trombone in the garden (bringing smiles to the faces of many of the residents and carers!), and we could also pass over a cake, balloons and some gifts. The offer of matches to light her birthday candles was politely declined – apparently in case one of the residents accidentally (or deliberately!) set fire to something, perhaps to relieve the boredom of lockdown!

Thank you so much to everyone who kindly send cards for Mum's special day. One of the carers read them all out to her and put them up in her bedroom. The same lovely lady always reads out any post or cards Mum receives, so be assured anything sent to Madi does always get to Christiane.

After three visits once a fortnight over the summer (with Madi gowned, masked and gloved and talking through a 6-foot high plastic screen and over a metal chain – somewhat akin to a prison visit!) sadly they were curtailed again, and all contact with Mum is now by letter/card or phone/facetime calls. We just hope that visiting will resume again before too long, not just for our Mum, and for poor Arienne who has been unable to come to England, but for all those in care homes who cannot see their loved ones and who desperately miss that contact.

On the positive side, Mum is very well looked after and is keeping healthy. The food is good, the staff are kind and helpful and there is a plentiful supply of chocolate biscuits!

This has been such a challenging year for everyone in so many ways, and we hope that you and your families have kept safe and well. From Mum and ourselves we wish you a happy Christmas and all the very best for 2021.

Best wishes, Arienne and Madi

[Christiane was a very well liked and respected, active member of our Church and it is good to know that she is well cared for and settled in Warwickshire. Hopefully it will not be too long before she is once again able to welcome visitors. We send her our love and best wishes for 2021. Our thanks go to Madi and Arienne for passing on news of their mother which will be of great interest to Christiane's many friends here.]

Photography Competition

A big thank you to all who entered the competition and donated to designated charities St. Cuthbert's Hospice here in Durham and Christian Aid worldwide. A very varied and high standard of entries made deciding delightfully difficult. I can announce that the following are category winners:

Best Winter Photograph:
Janet Thornborrow (untitled)



Most Entries: Ray Anglesea
(untitled example)



Best Night Photograph: John Durell
(Ignite at Gibside)



Most Humorous Photograph: Anne Cramb
(There's Moose Loose About the Hoose)



11.

Most Fortuitous Photograph: Kathleen Clasper
(The End of the Rainbow(s))



Best Travel Photograph: Heinz Fuchs
(taken in Germany on Christmas Day)



Most Holy Photograph: Kath Ogilvie
(Emmanuel, God with Us)



Best Indoor Photograph and Best Abstract Image:
David Thornborrow (Jesus Bids Us Shine)



The overall winner - and cover for this issue is by - Ray Anglesea, chosen because even in winter there is colour, beauty, and the hope of spring.

Marcus



One of my Memorable Walks by Graham Cooper

When I was a student in Newcastle, [LT1] I met a few students who had joined the Lyke Wake Club. They joined the club on walking 40 miles across the North York Moors within 24 hours. The origin of this club was a challenge published in the *Dalesman* magazine in 1955 by Bill Cowley of Potto Hill Farm near Osmotherley. The name comes from Old Norse “watching a corpse”, and some old folklore of souls being carried over the moors *en route* to Valhalla.



I agreed with 2 friends, men whom I first met at university, that we would walk the route from Ravenscar on the North Yorkshire coast to a point near Osmotherley on midsummer day, 1970, to have the advantage of the longest hours of daylight. We met with 2 cars, and pitched camp at Potto Hill Farm on the preceding afternoon, cooked something on a primus stove, and went to bed early. We rose before dawn at about 3 a.m., had breakfast, and drove the short distance to the west end of the walk. We left one car there, and drove in the other car to the Raven Hall Hotel by the coast in Ravenscar, setting off from there suitably shod with provisions at 7 a.m.

One of the friends had done the walk before in the opposite direction, which was reputed to be only slightly easier. The route roughly followed the east-west watershed across the widest stretch of the North York Moors. For much of the way in 1970 there was no defined path, and we often relied on our compass to cross rough moorland, but there were one or two prominent landmarks to pass, such as the Fylingdales Early Warning Centre (3 white golf balls). The sun got ever brighter and the air warmer. We saw no cloud all day. We did thankfully pass some streams from which to replenish our water bottles. We reached the third road on the route and the *Lion Inn* at Blakey at 2 p.m., and entered gratefully. The licensee told us that they closed at 2 p.m. and could sell us nothing; one customer took pity on us and handed us his unfinished pint of lemonade! About 10 miles further on at 6 p.m. we crossed the next road at the village of Chopgate, where we entered the pub. None of us were accustomed heavy drinkers, but we each took a pint of beer and then looked round at each other to see we were holding empty glasses! We ordered a second pint each which went down at a more civilized rate.

We set off up the next moor for the last quarter of the journey, but we were getting tired. We lost our way taking a less direct route to our next road and the car, which we reached at 11.30 p.m. feeling exhausted. We fell into the car gratefully to drive the mile or two to Potto Hill Farm where we went to bed in our small tent without delay. It must have been after 10 a.m. when we woke, ready for breakfast. Then we discovered that the car with the food was the one at Ravenscar! We hungrily struck camp and drove to Ravenscar where it was late for lunch, let alone breakfast! The final excitement was that initially we could not start the Ravenscar car; I think that we eventually push-started it, and went our separate ways to Newcastle and Manchester as one old and two new members of the club, entitled to wear the black tie with the badge below.



[Thank you, Graham, for this item. Editor]

An Elder's Comment on "Crossing the Road."

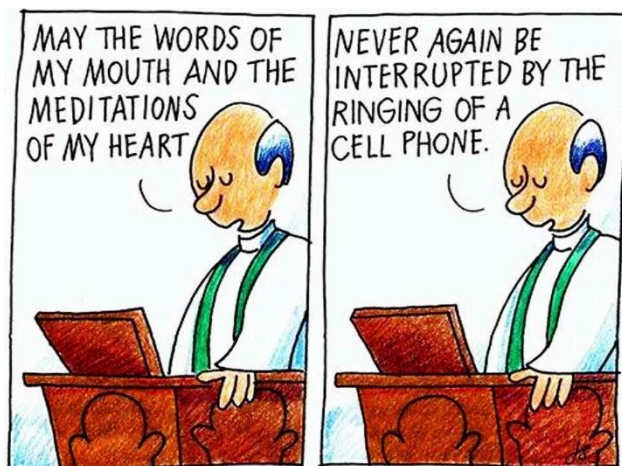
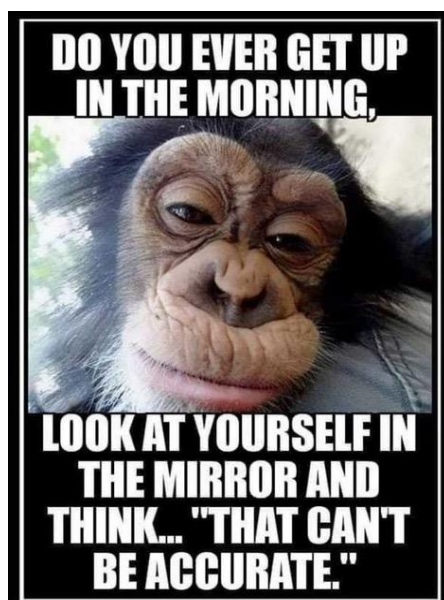
In the January "Review," I sought to promote the merits of a book on "Crossing the Road." But whether or not you have decided to get a copy, what follows may still be of interest. Its basic message (as I read it) is that we need to be strong in our faith if we are going to be able to put up with criticism from others without feeling either hurt or confused. Otherwise we may suffer from what the author calls "Conflicted Religious Identity Syndrome." So to vaccinate against CRIS, I wish to assure you that our church has a strong identity.

My "text" is not from the Bible here (authoritative though that is), but from our hymn book "Rejoice and Sing." Entry 761 is not a hymn, but a statement with the forbidding title "The Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church." No, you are not into a head scratching exercise here – I only want to introduce the basics. It reads... "With the whole Christian Church, the United Reformed Church believes in one God, Father Son and Holy Spirit." How does that relate to us as "United Reformed" Christians? I truly think that we suffer from an inappropriate title here. First, it is in the past tense, when we live in the present and for the future. Second, we live in an age when conflict and division abound, and trumpeting that we are "united" sounds rather off-key. And thirdly, the term "reformed" carries with it unfortunately a lot of baggage from the 16th Century onwards that hinders rather than helps us being seen as agents of healing for the future.

But do not despair. What matters most is not our title, but how we see ourselves as agents for change in the future. And here I think that we have what a cards player would call "a winning hand." Consider afresh the introduction to our statement of faith with just a few key words underlined ... "With the whole Christian Church, the United Reformed Church believes in one God, Father Son and Holy Spirit." First, we are not alone, but with other Christians of all stripes on our journey of evangelism into the future. And secondly, we believe in a God who is both indivisibly one and also the God of all peoples everywhere. So we have a platform from which to parley confidently with both other Christians and people of other faiths on the nature of faith itself. (Parley is an old English word, from which we get Parliament, and simply means to argue or debate rather than to fight). Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we may yet come to a fresh revelation of the divine by sharing our time and treasure with others.

Ron Todd

P.S. "Why did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha and Mohammed Cross the Road" by Brian D. McLaren is published by Hodder and Stoughton in paperback, price £9.99.



[With thanks to Bethel News for the Vicar joke.]



SMILE ... LAUGH ... It does you good!



The Nation's Favourite Novel

One of the most interesting programmes on television recently was “The Nation’s Favourite Novel”. This was a countdown of twenty novels as chosen by the British public. Authors such as Philippa Gregory and Joanna Trollope and celebrities Fern Britton, Hugh Dennis and Greg Wallace, among others, discussed their favourite novel. Charles Dickens was represented in the top ten with *David Copperfield*, also *Vanity Fair* by William Thackeray, *Middlemarch* by George

Eliot and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte. Some of the more modern novels were “*Day of The Triffids*”, “*1984*” and “*Birdsong*”. So what came top? Number one was “*Pride and Prejudice*” by Jane Austen.

This programme was followed by an excellent film of “*Pride and Prejudice*”, starring Keira Knightley as Elizabeth Bennett. The acerbic wit and sardonic humour of her character was well portrayed and also the dry wit of Mr. Bennett. The acting and the screenplay was so well done, as was the recreation of the houses, landscapes and costumes of Regency England.

One of my favourite novels, “*Rebecca*” by Daphne du Maurier was also in the top ten. This has been so well represented in film but I think the best interpretation is the original with Laurence Olivier and Joan Fontaine. The fact that it is filmed in black and white gives a menacing quality to the sinister house with its terrible secret. Susan Hill, of “*Woman in Black*” fame, has written a fascinating sequel to “*Rebecca*”. It is “*Mrs. De Winter*” telling the story from the second Mrs. De Winter’s point of view.

I wonder if you agree with the top choice of “*Pride and Prejudice*”? What would you have chosen?

Barbara Tinsley

Jewels in my Hand by Sasha Moorsom (1931-1993)

I hold dead friends like jewels in my hand
watching their brilliance gleam against my palm
Turquoise and emerald, jade, a golden band.

All ravages of time they can withstand
like talismans their grace keeps me from harm
I hold dead friends like jewels in my hand.

I see them standing in some borderland
Their heads half turned, waiting for my arm
Turquoise and emerald, jade, a golden band.

I'm not afraid they will misunderstand
My turning to them like a magic charm
I hold dead friends like jewels in my hand
Turquoise and emerald, jade, a golden band.



[Sent in by Revd Ray Anglesea]

Revd Dr. John Bradbury's Christmas Day Message

The Revd Dr. John Bradbury, General Secretary of the United Reformed Church, compares the change in Mary and Joseph's plan for their firstborn to the havoc wreaked by the coronavirus pandemic, and God's presence through it all in this reflection for Christmas day.

“What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it”. (John 3b-5)

How are your Christmas plans faring, I wonder? How did the plans of Mary and Joseph for the birth of their firstborn fare, I wonder? Whilst our Prime Minister has locked us down, the Emperor Augustus sent everyone out on the road.

As modern human beings, we love to feel in control. We have pushed death to the margins of life. Scientific endeavour leads us to believe there is a solution to every problem and a cure for every ill. We plan strategically and assess our risk. A tiny virus turned the world upside down.

2020 has been a dark year. We have mourned, lost loved ones, and been physically distanced from our own flesh and blood. For some, we have gone nowhere whilst being rushed off our feet. For others we have sat. And sat. And sat. And the doorbell has not rung. Human ingenuity has flourished. Life, love and hope have moved online in ways we'd never imagined. Culture has found new outlets, and scientists have become celebrities. Yet we know we have been living a half-life. The wave and the smile at the camera are not a hug from a loved one. The hug some long for will never caress them again.

As I write, news is landing of borders closing to stop the mutant Coronavirus spreading from our shores. In a matter of days, European free movement as we have known it comes to an end. We are boxed in. Shut up. And stare into a zoom lens wearing our ‘this is normal really’ expression.

The world is radically different from that in which Mary and Joseph trekked to Bethlehem. Radically the same, too. Viruses, and rulers, and powers and dominions beyond our imagining, wreak havoc upon our delusions of control. Into this world God came. Barriers and borders were broken down. Heaven and earth combined, and God and humanity were united in flesh and blood. God did not zoom in from afar, withholding physical presence to mitigate the risk. A certain risk that would lead to the cross.

God did not come into our midst in flesh and blood to sit with us in the darkness. Though God does that. God came into the darkness to transform it. The other side of Christmas lies Easter. Death transformed. Life renewed. Human powers subverted. Light overwhelming darkness. The feast of Christmas celebrates the flesh and blood coming of God in our midst to effect that transformation. It catches us up into the life and light that is for all peoples. I pray that in this Christmas of darkness you will catch a glimpse of that light, and bear that light, such that it might indeed be life and light for all.

Published 21st December 2020

[“At this point in time in the pandemic, the sermon and the poem for Epiphany (Jewels in my hand by Sasha Moorsom) seem so relevant.” Ray Anglesea.][Thanks go to Ray for sending this item in.]

From first breath to last, from vigorous life to eventual death, You are with us Lord.
 You know all our secret worries and sins and yet You do not withhold Your Love.
 You understand us as no-one else in our lives will ever be able to or try to do.
 Throughout our lives You share our greatest joys and inevitable crushing sorrows.
 We know that through times of trial we can reach out to You and You will hear our cries.
 Unworthy as we are, You have given us so much and You have forgiven us for so much.
 For all these reasons, Lord, we love You with all our hearts, our minds and our souls.



L.T.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Dear brothers and sisters,

In normal times we have been able to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity by sharing worship together and being enriched by each other's traditions. This year of course this is not possible but just as moving to worshipping online does not mean our churches are closed, our prayer for Christian Unity is alive and vibrant and we pray this may be a sign of hope in our world.

We are very mindful that all of us are currently faced with many challenges, as we seek to worship together safely, provide care for those in need, and share the good news of Jesus Christ.

In this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we assure you of our prayers for all of the churches in our area, and of our commitment to our partnership in the Gospel as we all walk together during these times of anxiety and grief. May all of us know the hope which is found in Jesus Christ as we share his love with the communities we serve.

A prayer for Christian Unity

Lord, you invite us to share together in your love.

You call on us to see the beauty of each other's expression of the faith,
and to see the unity beyond the differences that can make us afraid.

Fill our hearts with the love of you, and make us new again.

Open our eyes afresh to our part in your love for the world,
that as one body we may sing your praise,
serve the needy, and seek the lost.

Amen

The Right Revd Christine Hardman
Bishop of Newcastle

The Revd David Herbert, Moderator
Northern Synod of the United Reformed Church

The Right Revd Terence Draine
Bishop of Middlesbrough

Revd Dr John Claydon
Baptist Regional Minister (Pastoral)

The Right Revd Paul Butler
Bishop of Durham

The Right Revd Mark Wroe
Bishop of Berwick

The Right Revd Robert Byrne CO
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

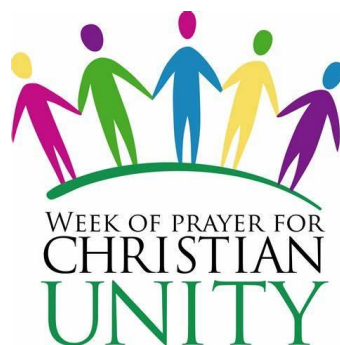
Major David Burns
Divisional Commander
The Salvation Army North East England

Dr Mark Bonnington
New and Independent Churches NE

The Right Revd Paul Ferguson
Bishop of Whitby

The Revd Richard Andrew
Chair, Darlington Methodist District

The Revd Paul Revill
Baptist Regional Minister (Mission Enabler)



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2021

Monday 27th January marked the 76th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, a day that's been designated International *Holocaust Remembrance Day*.

The Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, writing in the *The Times* last year, tells the remarkable story of Dr Joseph Breuer, an outstanding Jewish scholar born in Hungary, a popular teacher with poor eye sight, who later became a leader in his Frankfurt Jewish community when the Nazis came to power. Adopting the teaching of his faith he would greet people with a generous smile and doff his hat, from trusted students, to street sweepers and local shop owners.

In November 1938, during "Kristallnacht" his synagogue was burnt down and erased, his seminary closed down. All Jewish men were instructed to assemble in a courtyard. An SS officer barked an order that all men over the age of 60 step forward. Dr Breuer was 57 and remained in his place. Another burly officer shouted at him; "You are over 60, step forward." He obeyed the order and with other older men was later sent home. The younger group of under 60s were deported to Buchenwald and Dachau.

The burly officer who had instructed the charismatic rabbi to step forward later called at his house and told him to leave Germany immediately with his family. "Why are you helping me?" The officer replied "I had been the police constable in your local area and you always made a point of greeting me." Rabbi Breuer and his family with others of his community left for Antwerp, then to New York where he re-established his seminary and built a community. Dr Breuer died in 1980. To this day his Jewish community maintains a large synagogue, several schools for children of all ages and a centre for religious scholarship, which has had significant influence on thousands of lives.

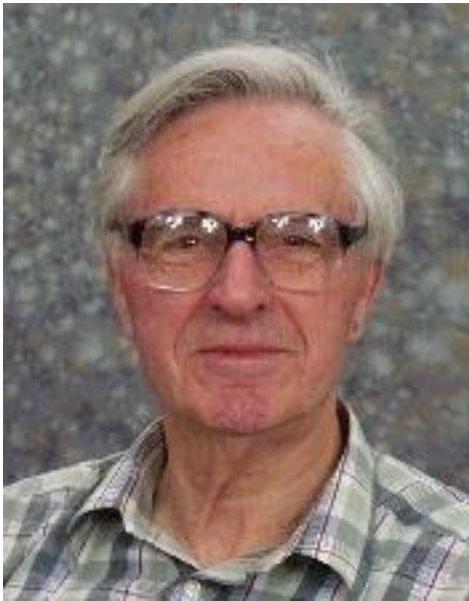
One German officer chose to risk his own life to save one man, but it would be impossible to calculate the number of people whose lives have been influenced by that decision. Not least Rabbi Breuer's great grandson, Lord Jonathan Kestenbaum, a Labour member of the House of Lords and former Chief Executive of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Art, and Chancellor of Plymouth University.

In that ocean of unspeakable Nazi hatred, for one moment, a former police constable and Nazi officer looked upon a Jew and instead of seeing the caricature cultivated by the Nazi propaganda machine, saw a human being.

On this year's Holocaust Memorial Day we are reminded of past atrocities. Society fails when we stand apart. It succeeds when we stand together.

Revd Ray Anglesea





Professor Sir Arnold Wolfendale, FRS

“It is with great sadness that I announce the death of Professor Sir Arnold Wolfendale, FRS, who passed away on 21 December 2020.

After his PhD work on cosmic rays and a Lectureship appointment at Manchester University in Blackett's group, Arnold Wolfendale moved to Durham with George Rochester in 1956 and was promoted to Professor in 1965. At the time he was mostly concerned with the properties, the nuclear physics, of cosmic rays and the way in which these atomic particles interact with matter in the laboratory. He was well known for his development of two novel techniques: the neon flash tube and the 'solid iron' spectrograph.

Together with colleagues from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, and Osaka City University, Arnold developed largescale underground detectors to detect cosmic rays and in 1965 reported the discovery of the first atmospheric neutrinos in the Kolar Gold Fields Experiment. The various measurements Arnold made – the neutrino, muon, proton, pion and neutron spectra – together made it possible to estimate the primary spectrum of cosmic rays at the top of the atmosphere. This led Arnold to wonder where these cosmic rays came from, drawing him into astronomy and, as Head of the Department of Physics, reviving astronomy in Durham. Arnold redirected the experimental efforts in bubble chambers towards adaptive optics and he recruited some of the brightest young talents in astrophysics, cosmology and astronomy to Durham University. Arnold's own research interests led to the creation of the gamma-ray astronomy group. The seeds he planted flourished and soon Durham became one of the leading international centres for space science.

Arnold Wolfendale was a prolific and internationally esteemed researcher. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1973 (being President 1981-1983), a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1977 and served as Astronomer Royal from 1991 to 1995. He was knighted in 1995 and served as President of the European Physical Society from 1999 to 2001.

Arnold served as Head of the Physics Department for three periods, 1974-1977, 1980-1984 and 1986-1988, before retiring in 1992. Arnold's passion for physics did not fade after his retirement. He continued active research and the breadth of his knowledge and insight continued to be appreciated by his many friends and collaborators.

Sir Arnold's funeral took place at Durham Crematorium on 11 January at 1p.m. Due to current Covid restrictions the number of people who could attend in person was by invitation of the family only and this would be a short service. However, the service will be streamed and available live or at a later time via web link: <https://www.wesleymedia.co.uk/webcast-view>

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Stuart Corbridge
Vice-Chancellor and Warden, University of Durham

[I thought this information would be of general interest to everyone and particular interest to those members of the Church who were also members of the Caledonian Society and met Sir Arnold at meetings of that now defunct Society. A few verb tenses have been changed due to the passage of time since this item was released. Editor]



Left – “Local Hero”
Bill Parker coaching
from the riverbank.

Beryl Crockford Award

Congratulations to Bill Parker and Bryan Steel who share the 2020 Beryl Crockford Award for their outstanding contribution to junior rowing over many years. The award was set up by Duncan Crockford in memory of his late wife Beryl, who passed away in 2016 following a tragic bike accident in Australia. Beryl

represented GB at three Olympic Games and was a trailblazer for women’s rowing. (The British Rowing medal is inscribed with five words describing the qualities that Beryl lived by and valued in her athletes: Imagine, Inspire, Educate, Collaborate, Innovate.) Awarded annually, the winners are decided by members of the British Rowing Junior Committee.

Bill Parker, St Leonard’s School BC/Durham ARC

To introduce rowing to one school with no previous involvement in the activity shows a high degree of dedication to the sport. To do so in a second school and inspire pupils to succeed at regional, national and international levels indicates a deep commitment to rowing and to the development of young people. After starting his career coaching rowing at Consett Grammar School, Bill moved to St Leonard’s School – one mile from the River Wear – and it was almost inevitable that the School would, in a short period, find that it had a boat club of its own in 1971. The School had no previous involvement in rowing; it had no boat house, oars or boats. But Bill possesses a great ability to persuade people and involve them in supporting young people. No obstacle was allowed to stop young people from rowing.

Dedication to fundraising was exceeded by the commitment to training on and off the water. Success followed. The British Rowing Almanacs give the facts. There were national medals in the late 1970s and the first international success in 1982. In the 1980s Bill was joined by Malcolm Proud and they made a formidable and winning partnership. The Club regularly achieved 100 wins each season. These included wins at Women’s Henley, topping the medals table at the 2004 National Schools Regatta, a Junior World Championship and representation in the England and GB squads.

Bill also took on significant regional roles and continued his involvement with Durham ARC. Indeed, when he officially retired from St Leonard’s Boat Club, he coached juniors at Durham ARC to further national success. Throughout his coaching Bill was supported by his wife May and his family. We owe them an immense debt of gratitude and our heartfelt thanks. Bill has shared his passion for rowing with generations of juniors for over 50 years. He has inspired juniors to remarkable success and sustained involvement in rowing as adults drawing on the ethos of excellence and commitment that Bill established as a coach.

[Bill played Badminton at Waddington Street URC before the Hall was altered and Badminton ceased. His wife May’s death on 7th October was reported in The Review for November 2020.]



Who says animals have no soul?

The rapt expression on the faces of both child and dog are very touching.

Lord, as I lay me down to sleep, I pray for my dog, my best friend.

If I am happy or if I weep, He knows even if I try to pretend.

He stays by my side as I play. Shares my bed when no-one knows.

I hope that with me he'll always stay. Bless him always wherever he goes.

He begs for food from off my plate. I sneak him some whenever I can.

He eats my sprouts - which is great. When Mum shouted, how fast he ran!

Will I ever again have a friend so good, who loves me just the way I am?

Who puts up with my every mood, and is always playful, happy and calm.

I thank you Lord, for my wonderful friend, who walks beside me every day,

Whose faithfulness and love will never end, as I walk along on life's way.

[L. Thomson]