

News from the Manse

Dear friends,

It doesn't seem that long since we celebrated Christmas and up and down the country and beyond believers and non believers joined in the celebrations with cards, food, presents and all the trimmings. It is interesting though that as we approach Easter this coming month it will only be believers that celebrate – the rest will acknowledge a holiday period and a time for sharing chocolate. Even then for the believers some will only celebrate Easter Day as they find Maundy Thursday and Good Friday too painful. Then a few weeks after that Pentecost will come around – the world will have no idea about this and indeed some believers find this so scary they would rather it passed them by. Yet, Easter is the reason Jesus was born and without Easter there would be no Pentecost. So, as believers we should celebrate all these great Festivals with the same enthusiasm and expectation.

Maundy Thursday, the night of the Passover, we come, as Jesus did with His disciples, to be reminded about Israel's history and the saving love of God who rescued His people from Egypt. The Scriptures record for us the breaking of bread, part of the Passover, with new words – 'This is my body broken for you', and 'This cup is the New Covenant in my blood'.

Jesus shared the traditional Jewish remembrance and brought a new feast to His church, the celebration of Holy Communion. Passover remembered the Angel of Death passing over the people of Israel so we come reflecting that now the Angel of Death has no power over the people of Christ. The blood of the New Covenant marks God's claim on His people as surely did the blood on the door posts so long ago in Egypt. WOW!

Good Friday – the day of crucifixion, a day to remind us of the depth of God's love as He willingly gives His only Son so that our debts may be paid on the nail. As we read the gospel accounts of this how can we not stand in awe and wonder at the foot of the cross? Betrayal, denial, scourging, humiliation and pain beyond imagination was the price Jesus paid that we should be made clean and pure before God His Father in heaven. We may find this painful and difficult but we should be there with Jesus feeling His pain and suffering because if we don't then we can never fully understand the joy of Easter Day.

Easter Saturday, the Sabbath, with Jesus lying in the tomb seems to pass unnoticed. The disciples must have had heavy hearts wondering if they had got it all wrong in giving up everything to follow Jesus and wondering about the future, and of course fear of the authorities now, little wonder there is no Scriptural reference to this day.

So we come to Easter Day, the day of Resurrection. The women surprised to find the stone rolled away and the tomb empty; Peter and John running to see what had happened; the encounter on the road to Emmaus; Jesus appearing to His disciples. No longer are they alone; Jesus is with them; Jesus is risen from the dead; He has conquered sin and death. There is now hope, joy and peace, for love is victorious. The disciples' lives are transformed; the truth becomes clear – this Jesus IS God's Son. WOW!

Yet again very little is recorded in Scripture perhaps it is too difficult to put into words. Perhaps this is an experience we have to feel in our own lives rather than read about for someone else.

You can never know the greatest joy without first experiencing being in the depth of despair; never fully appreciate the brightest light until you have been in the darkest place.

The disciples could feel the joy because they had been with Jesus every step of the way no matter how hard and painful that had been. Shall we do the same this Easter?

Your servants in Christ

Peter and Eileen

Service Themes for April.

1 st	Before Pilate
8 th	Empty Tomb (EASTER DAY)
15 th	Women at the tomb
22 nd	Guards
29 th	Mary Magdalene

Easter Sunday – April 8th

Our Easter celebration service on 8th April will start with tea, coffee and hot cross buns being served from just before 10am until 10.15am. Come early and spend time with folks you don't often have the chance to talk to.

There will be a family communion at roughly 10.30 -10.35am so that the whole congregation is able to celebrate together before the "early people" leave.

It is anticipated that the service will end around 11.20am to enable folk to have a further opportunity to have tea, coffee and hot cross buns and time to chat.

Thank You

We would like to express our sincere thanks for all of the support, cards and prayers that have been offered during Richard's mum's illness and when she passed away on the 4th March. It has meant a lot to us.

*Richard, Marina, Matthew, Alex & Joseph
Dodgson.*

Thank You

I would like to thank everybody for their prayers and good wishes during my stay in hospital and since my return home. Your support has meant a great deal to me.

Debbie Thompson

Church Telephone Number

Please note that from April, the church telephone number will be 07512 182008. This number will also be displayed on the notice board outside the church.

FROM THE ELDERS

The AGM is to be held on the 19th April and we desperately need nominations for new Elders by then. We need to find at least one Development Elder and two Pastoral Elders. If you feel that you could fill one of these roles please let Dorothy Barker or Dorothy Coates know before the 19th April. For more information please see the article about the AGM on page eight.

DON'T GIVE UP!

Some people will ask me how I cope with my illness (S.L.E. and chronic lung disease) but I look at it like this: -

In the morning it is an effort; but at the end of the day it is an achievement.

Don't give up! If I didn't have the Lord, where would I be now?

Debbie Thompson x



**Not so much a programme
More an experience**

**A world in crisis?
Your church seeking direction?
Is God is calling you?**

TLS offers an opportunity to:
Examine your faith
Enrich your discipleship
Explore your calling
To get going with God

Training for **L**earning and **S**erving has been around for over 25 years. Since 1995 it has provided the opportunity for more than 800 people in the United Reformed Church to learn and train to serve God more effectively.

This is what some of those who have experienced TLS say:

'TLS has helped me get a better understanding of God and myself'

'It gave me the confidence to open prayer to the community in an effective way.'

'The educational value of the course has been great to someone starting with only a small knowledge base.'

'I didn't think I could do it but others did, and with support and encouragement and prayerful backing I now feel I am where God wants me to be.'

'My year on TLS has been a fascinating and wonderful journey.'

WHAT IS TLS?

It is

- A spiritual journey
- A variety of courses on subjects related to Christian life and discipleship
- A diverse learning experience with opportunities for
 - Reflective and practical work
 - Personal and group study
 - Local and residential gatherings
- A fellowship of friendly people

YOU CAN DO TLS

- Just out of personal interest, to help you be more understanding and effective in your Christian discipleship
- To explore opportunities to serve God in the future
- To help you acquire United Reformed Church Assembly Lay Preaching accreditation
- Because it doesn't matter whether you have some academic experience or none.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

More details, including the current prospectus and application form, are to be found on the United Reformed Church Web-site at: www.urc.org.uk

Click the TLS icon on the front page or follow the route through 'What we do'

OR

Contact the TLS Administrator, Mrs Heather Skidmore, at:-

27 Yew Tree Road, Elkesley, Retford, Notts. DN22 8AY

Tel: 01777 838634

E-mail: tlsskid@btinternet.com

who will be happy to send to you the TLS Prospectus and Application Form

Muses from the Bottom Step

Wow... so by the time you read this I will be two weeks in to the Easter vacation... second term finished... six months since leaving Newcastle... where has the time gone?

Being that it is the end of a very busy term and though I know we are in the period of Lent, with pain and glory of Easter round the corner; theological muses are a bit beyond me. So instead I thought I would share with you the short story that I wrote for this term's Westminster Chronicle. A 'none' typical day in the life of the college, based on three mystery items!

Challenge: See if you can spot them and send your answers on a postcard to me at Westminster College! (This is not a bid for post honest – though a postcard occasionally would be nice, don't get much post ☺)

Once upon a Thursday morning, when the clock struck the eleventh hour, the coffee flowed into the mugs of the Westminster students. There was a sense of anticipation in the dining hall, as there was to be an announcement of great importance. Now why this announcement was happening at this hour and not at the end of morning prayers when all other notices are normally given, only the storyteller knows! Suddenly, the door of the hall flew open. Everyone fell silent. "Have I missed it?" There was always one who had to be late. "No" was the murmur as everyone returned to their coffee. "Phew, it's these boots; they take forever to get on." Normally, people would ignore random comments such as these, but one slightly over zealous student picked up on this particular one and looked down at the boots, to be greeted with a sight which liturgically may have been a little confusing. There on the feet of the student who'd been late was a pair of red Dr Marten boots with purple spots. "Why?" "Why not!"

Before further discussion could be had over this extraordinary pair of boots, the door of the hall once again swung open. Everyone turned. This time one of Westminster's esteemed tutors walked through the door. "Have you heard yet?" "No" was again the murmur as everyone turned back to their coffee. The tutor walked over to get a mug of coffee and joined a small group of students who seemed to be deeply immersed in conversation over a highly intriguing piece of scripture. Well Westminster is a theological college, so would you not expect students to be spending every spare moment discussing scripture?!

Conversations continued to rumble round the hall with much surmising on what the great announcement would be. Was it new books for the library? Extra singing practice? A trip to see the sea? Anticipation was building, when suddenly the door opened again. The room went deadly silent as the Principal walked in. "Are we all here?" she asked. There was a mumbled yes; no one seemed to be missing or owning up to being missing. "Good. Well thank you all for gathering and I'm sorry that I've had to call you all together now, but as you may have gathered this information could not wait. You may have heard that Senatus accidentally misplaced a very useful artefact last week, but I am happy to announce that after much searching we found our sonic screwdriver!" There was a great sigh of relief, all again was well at Westminster College.

The End

I do hope that this Easter you come again to see that through the pain and anguish of the cross comes the glory and majesty of our risen Christ—our saviour and that of the worlds.

As ever,
Yours in Christ
Elaine

Westminster College Appeal

To date, the Appeal has raised £4,202,556, of which Synods have pledged £2,055,000 and Churches and members £161,098. This takes us more than half way towards our £7m target, and gives great encouragement and credibility as we now turn to charitable trusts and other bodies outside the URC. 134 churches have already made their gifts; they have come in all sizes, and we are grateful for everyone. If your church has not yet decided on its gift, we hope you might consider- as many have done- spreading it over several years.

And a special word of thanks to all individual members who are supporting the Appeal; your personal investment in the Church's future is a great encouragement and affirmation for us all at Westminster.

With warm thanks,
Susan Durber, Principal
Brian Long, Appeal Convenor

Women's Fellowship

The Women's Fellowship meets at 2.00 pm on the last Tuesday of every month at which all are welcome. We have a short service followed by a speaker, a cup of tea and a biscuit.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 24th April 2012 and it will be a magazine day. Please bring a story, poem or reading. We look forward to welcoming you there.

For further information please contact Moira Applegate, telephone number 2818930.

Synod Training Event

Synod intends to run a Fire Safety Training Day on 12th May 2012 at West End URC, and hope to follow it up with an emergency life support course in September. Anyone who is interested in attending either event should please contact Andrew Atkinson at the Synod Office (tel: 0191 232 1168). Or speak to Colin Wilkes or Dorothy Barker for further information.

March Quiz

In the absence of any entries for the March "ABBREVIATIONS" competition, the prizes go unclaimed. If you would like to have done the March competition but have not had time this is now carried over to April.

ABBREVIATIONS

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. B.B.C. | 4. M.M.R.V. | 7. R.S.V.P. |
| 2. J.C.R. | 5. D.J. | 8. N.B. |
| 3. B.S.T. | 6. P.S. | 9. P.G.C.E. |

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 10. M.A. | 25. M.E. | 40. S.D.P. |
| 11. M.R.I.S. | 26. E.C.G. | 41. P.C.C. |
| 12. F.L.A. | 27. A.R.P. | 42. K.F.C. |
| 13. L.N.E.R. | 28. N.C.O. | 43. L.C.C |
| 14. V.S.O. | 29. W.W.F. | 44. P.M. |
| 15. B.E.M. | 30. I.O.U. | 45. A + E |
| 16. F.T. | 31. C.N.D. | 46. E.N.T. |
| 17. T.L.C. | 32. C.C.T. | 47. O.U. |
| 18. D.V. | 33. I.T.M.A. | 48. P.E.P. |
| 19. S.C.M. | 34. N.C.B. | 49. I.S.A. |
| 20. B.F.G. | 35. L.R.A.M. | 50. L.S.D. |
| 21. S.T.D. | 36. F.E.C. | 51. S.O.S. |
| 22. U.F.O. | 37. L.S.E | |
| 23. T.T.F.N. | 38. L.A. | |
| 24. N.V.Q. | 39. P.P.E. | |

Answers in the stamp box by the 15th April

Can you believe it?

Every 2 minutes, someone, somewhere is diagnosed with leprosy! Seema, aged 16, was at school in India when her symptoms first appeared. She was becoming unable to write or grasp small objects; so without diagnosis and treatment her hands were becoming immovable and useless. The nerve damage could lead to burns and ulcers. In her country, young women are rejected by society when smitten by leprosy, considered unworthy of marriage or having a family. Thanks to early effective treatment, Seema is now back at school and helping at home, which would have been impossible without the generosity of supporters.

So, the bumper crop of stamps which appeared this month goes to the Leprosy Association. They are most grateful, and have asked if we can also save picture postcards and foreign coins.

Barbara Kitchen

Very little is needed to make a happy life; it's all within yourself, in your way of thinking.

(Marcus Aurelius – AD 121 - 180).

To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan but also believe.

(Anatole France – 1844 -1924)

Church Annual General Meeting: Thursday 19th April 2012 at 7pm.

Every member should have received, or will shortly receive, a copy of the Reports booklet. Each organisation associated with the life of the church has been asked to send us a report covering its activities for the last year. We hope that you will read the reports and come to the meeting with relevant questions and words of encouragement to the leaders of the groups. Please pray for each of the groups. It is hoped that at the Church meeting, we may be able to appoint more Elders. Currently, some members do not have a visiting Pastoral Elder, and this is a cause for concern, particularly with the forthcoming vacancy in mind. It is vital that we keep in touch with all our members. Elders can encourage members in their faith, and support them and their families in times of need.

Pastoral Elders:-

- Exercise pastoral oversight of a group of members within the church
- Attend two meetings a year with the Development Elders
- On a rota basis, take the church flowers to those who are in need of them.
- Ensure that members receive the church magazine each month
- Assist at Communion approx. 2 times a year
- As Duty Elder, welcome and look after a visiting preacher.

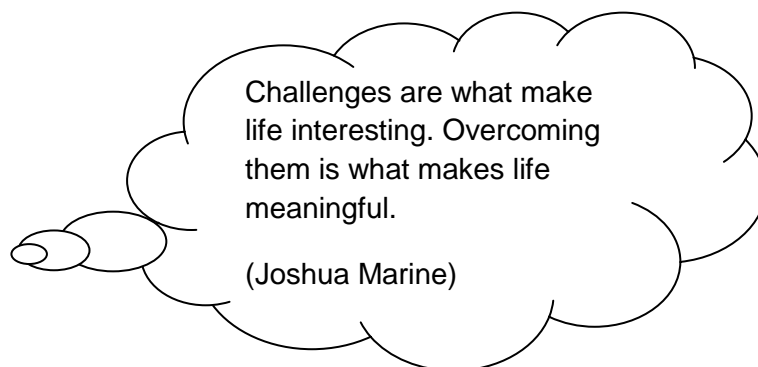
We also need more Development Elders, who will also have a vital role in the vacancy. They:-

- Exercise oversight of the spiritual life of the church
- Attend meetings
- Through prayer and discussion, develop strategies for the life of the church
- As Duty Elder, welcome and look after a visiting preacher
- Assist at Communion when required.

Please pray about the Pastoral and Development Elders at St. George's. If God puts a name into your prayers, please approach that person and encourage them to pray about it too. Perhaps it is the right time to have an Elder who will visit/keep in contact with the men folk?

If you require any additional information about what is entailed, please speak to one of the Development Elders, or Dorothy Barker, or Dorothy Coates. Elders serve for a term of 3 years, and then are eligible for re-election if appropriate.

DJB



Bible a Month Club: The West Balkans

“That’s how it is with my words. They don’t return to me without doing everything I send them to do” ***Isaiah 55. 11 (CEV)***

The West Balkans consists of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia. It covers an area of 259,000 sq km, about 7% more than the area of the UK. The population is 23 million, about 37% of that of the UK. The literacy rate- of people who can read and write- is 97%, and the main languages are Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serbian and Slovenian. The West Balkans has long been home to religious and political tensions, sitting as it does, at a crossroads of cultures and beliefs. So, there’s a real need for the Bible’s message of reconciliation and unity in individual lives and community.

Bible Societies in Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia have teamed up to launch a new Bible ministry. As one of the only international organisations operating daily in the region, Bible Society is well placed to work with the Church across all these countries. The aim is to bring the Bible’s message of reconciliation to individuals, politicians and churches, as well as tackle the increasing secularism in communities across the Balkans.

Cristian Romocea, Bible Society’s International Advocacy Officer, said, “Due to the influence of secularism and the decline of churches, Europe as a whole and the Balkan region in particular is becoming a new mission field in the classical sense of the word. We’re committed to taking the Bible’s life-changing message to the Balkans, to bring healing, reconciliation and hope”

Prayer Pointers

- Pray for the Church in the West Balkan countries. That they will rediscover the transforming power of the Bible’s message.
- Give thanks for the unity among the Bible Societies in the region. Pray for leaders to come forward to work with Bible Societies to train future leaders.
- Pray for the Christian-Muslim dialogue in the Balkan region, to share the love of Jesus to their Muslim neighbours.
- Pray for the younger generations who are faced with an unfiltered exposure to Western secularism.
- Pray that the church youth camps will be an opportunity to reach out with the Gospel.

Thank you for your faithful prayers

Northern Synod Prayers

We are asked to pray for the following Mission Partnerships, churches and individuals within our Synod.

April: Tyne Valley

1st St. Aidan’s Hexham; Rev’d Bill Ellerby; Horsley Village Church; John Knox, West Denton; Rev’d John Paul.

8th Ponteland: Rev’d Joan Ross: St. John’s Wideopen; Rev’d Philip Gray.

15th Church on the Green Stamfordham LEP; Rev’d Les Dinning; Great Bavington; Rev’d Ron Forster
22nd The Synod Trust; Mr Danny Pigeon, Synod Treasurer; Synod Health & Healing Advisor, Rev’d Liz Blair.

29th IPM Presbyterian Church in Mozambique); the four Societies; Men's, women's, Youth and Activists; the Presbyteries of Umbulizi Central, North and South centred on Maputo.

May: North Tyne

6th Bellingham LEP; Wark LEP; Falstone and Kielder; Rev'd Peter Wright

13th Retired ministers and ministers not in pastoral charge; ministerial self-appraisal co-ordinator, Mrs Margaret Humberston.

Children and Sunday School Stories

MOSES AND THE RED SEA

9 year old Joey was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday School.

'Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his army build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then he radioed headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved.'

'Now, Joey, is that really what your teacher taught you?' his Mother asked.

'Well, no, Mom. But, if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!'

Sunday after church, a Mom asked her very young daughter what the lesson was about. The daughter answered, "Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt."

Needless to say, the Mom was perplexed.

Later in the day, the pastor stopped by for tea and the Mom asked him what that morning's Sunday school lesson was about. He said "Be not afraid, thy comforter is coming."

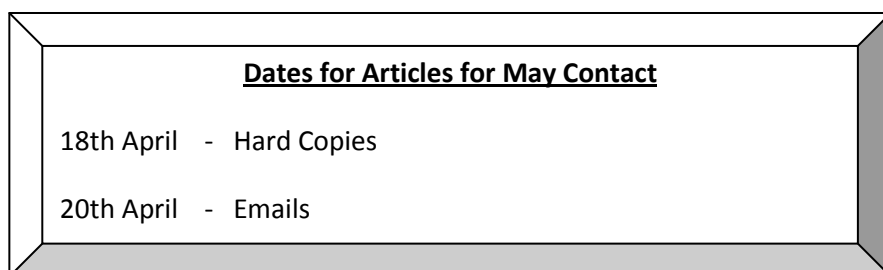
Diary

April

1 st	10.00 am	Palm Sunday (No Communion)
5 th	7.00 pm	<u>Maundy Thursday Service</u> at St. George's (led by Rev'd Heckels)
6 th	10.30am	<u>Good Friday Service</u> at St. Cuthbert's (led by Rev'd Johnson)
6 th	11 am	Procession of witness leaves from St. Gabriel's
6 th	11.30 am	Procession of Witness leaves St. Cuthbert's.
6 th	12 noon	Open Air worship at Hadrian Square (Byker, off Shields Road)
8 th	6.30am	Dawn Service at Heaton Park with Heaton Churches Together.
8 th	10.00 am	EASTER DAY worship with Family Communion; "See separate article"?
12 th	7.00 pm	Development Elders meet in Church Meeting Room.
19 th	7.00 pm	Church Annual General Meeting
22 nd	10.00 am	Worship led by Rev'd Stan May
29 th	10.00 am	Worship led by Rev'd Stuart Brock

May

6 th	10.00 am	Holy Communion
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Hire of Halls, Rooms and Church

Our premises are available for letting as follows:-

Regular Hires - based on a maximum of a 3 hour session

- Large Hall: £45
- Minor Hall: £30
- Meeting Room: £15
- Church: £45

One-off Hires - based on a maximum of a 3 hour session

- Large Hall: £60
- Minor Hall: £40
- Meeting Room: £20
- Church: £80

If you want to book any of the above, or require further information please telephone Miss Moira Applegate, telephone number 2818930.

Duty Rotas

	April					May	
	1st	8th	15th	22nd	29th	6th	13th
Duty Elder	Mrs S Nossiter	Mrs L Willford	Miss D Coates	Mrs D Barker	Mrs S Cowey	Mr H Fawcitt	Mrs. J Cartman
Door Steward	Mrs Das, & Mrs Cadwallader	Mrs Matfin, & Mr Armstrong	Mr & Mrs Fawcitt	Miss Foster & Mrs Thompson	Mrs Cartman & Mrs Smeaton	Mr & Mrs Nossiter	Mr & Mrs Cowey
Communion Stewards	Mrs J Holmes & Mrs D Barker					Mrs S Cowey & Mrs L Willford	
Computer Rota Setting up	Stewart Barclay	Sandra Nossiter	Bob Renton	Stewart Barclay	Sandra Nossiter	Bob Renton	Stewart Barclay
Computer Rota Operating	Anthony Armstrong	Lucy Cowey	Bob Renton	Stewart Barclay	Sandra Nossiter	Bob Renton	Stewart Barclay
Sound Desk	Norman Nossiter				Norman Nossiter		
Offering Counting	Ivy & Bob Renton	Sharon & Steve Cowey	Moira Applegate & Audrey Matfin	Sandra & Norman Nossiter	Dennis & Harry Fawcitt	Ivy & Bob Renton	Sharon & Steve Cowey
Flower Donations	Judith Das Edna Clark	No Donor	No Donor	Dorothy Cowey	Sandra & Norman Nossiter	No Donor	Angela MacKenzie
Flower Arranger	Clare Hutton	Eileen Heckles	Dorothy Barker	Sandra Nossiter	Clare Hutton	Eileen Heckles	Dorothy Barker
Flower Distribution	Mrs R Croft	Mrs J Das	Mrs J Watson	Mrs A Matfin	Mrs L Willford	Mrs J Holmes	Mrs D Barker

If you are unable to do any of your duties please arrange your own swaps in advance. Please don't leave it until the day of your duty as it is not always possible to get replacements on the day.