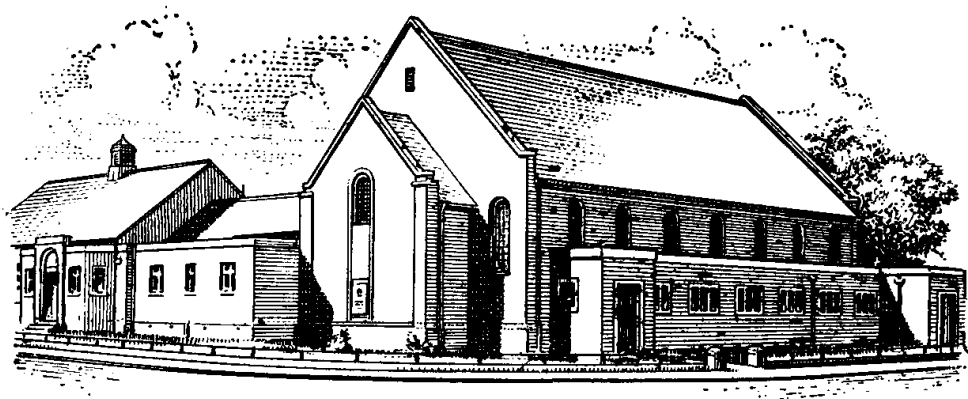


ST GEORGE'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

**NEWTON ROAD
HIGH HEATON
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
NE7 7HP**



ANNUAL REPORTS

2017

Foreword

Once again the annual General Meeting is upon us and in order that we might come prepared, each organisation or group associated with the life of the church has been asked to submit a report covering its activities for the last year. We hope that you will read these reports and come along to the AGM with pertinent questions and words of encouragement to the leaders of the groups. As you read the reports please bring each group before the Lord in prayer.

Please read all that is said here and bring your copy with you to the Church Meeting on Sunday 30th April 2017 at 12 noon. (Please note the slightly later time for starting). Church Meeting is an important council of the URC and enables each member to have their say in the running of the church. We hope that you will feel that this is something you will want to be involved in.

If you are unable to come, but would like to raise issues or questions, please let Dorothy Barker of Tony Hall know in advance of the meeting so that they can be dealt with and answers available.

St George's thanks everyone who has sent in a report, and for all the work they do week by week. Thank you too to everyone who has been involved in the production of this booklet and its delivery to you.

St George's Mission Statement

“St George's- Where Faith Comes To Life”

Minister's letter

The past few weeks have brought it home to me how much the life of our church has grown in the last few years. Let me take you back through just one week, and as I do remember two things: this was by no means our busiest week, and nor is it an exhaustive list of everything that went on in the church on those days.

On Saturday, we ran our latest Saturday Zone. We had done some quite extensive leafleting, but the beach and the park were stiff competition on the first really warm and sunny day of Spring. Still, we enjoyed welcoming some new children and introducing ourselves to their families.. How we did this was significant – we took our activities out of the building and engaged with passers-by on the street. Truly a step forward! Youth and Junior Church were out in force and took the lead in this.

On Friday we offered thanks to God and said our farewells at a thanksgiving service for the late May Spedding, one of our older members, who originally came to us from Belmont Methodist Church with her husband Jim. Our memories are an important part of who we are as a church, and the testimony of those who have been here longest is the bedrock on which our own lives of faith are built

On Thursday, as chaplain, I had the sad duty of conducting a funeral for a student of Northumbria University. Many students in Newcastle are local, or stay on here afterwards, so chaplaincy is local ministry There is an inevitable sense of waste and unrealised potential when someone dies partway through a course of study. I was very conscious of trying to speak words of comfort into a situation of intense pain, among people who by and large did not share our faith, but who shared a common need of comfort and hope.

On Wednesday evening I missed Steps, our mid-week cafe church group, because I had been asked along to the Tanners Arms on Byker Bridge to meet a group of performers interested in playing at the Heaton Festival in June. It is very exciting to see things taking shape, but it won't happen without more hard work, and a lot more prayer.

On Tuesday St George's teamed up with St Cuthbert's for the third in the series of soup lunches Heaton Churches Together run every year in Lent. These lunches are always a great opportunity to meet people from the other churches in Heaton and High Heaton, as we share in our spiritual preparations for Holy Week and Easter.

On Monday evening our evangelist Rob Wylie put on another of his many hats, and ran a Safeguarding course for us. This was not just for our own church activities – it also gave people the training they needed for volunteering activities with Junction 42, for example. Without in any way glossing over the seriousness of the issues, Rob nonetheless reassured us we are competent to deal with them, with just a bit of common sense and vigilance, backed up with pastoral sensitivity, clear communication and good record-keeping. The number of people from our congregation who decided it was worth giving up an evening of their time to come along shows how seriously we now take safeguarding.

On Monday morning I missed St Cuthbert's coffee morning, because I was greeting students at a Freshers' Fair at Coach Lane campus. It was worth going, because for the first time at any of these events, I met a student who was proud to say she was part of the URC and eager to get involved with the local church! She also told me about her work in Tanzania over the summer, at a refuge for women and girls.

On Sunday, worship was followed by a soup lunch in aid of our Seeds of Hope project in Uganda. This effort stemmed from an inspirational idea from Alison, based on the parable of the talents – with £5.00 each, how much could Youth and Junior Church raise? The answer was, well over £200!

Last Saturday, I missed a Circuit Awayday so that I could be there when St George's welcomed Mike and Ritchie of Blue Tiger Training. They delivered a very useful and stimulating day of First Aid training for the latest recruits to Newcastle Street Pastors, including of course Solomon, Tony and myself. Tony and I have already been out several times, and Tony volunteered for an extra shift last Friday so that a team could go out. I'm excited at the thought of seeing some familiar faces from St George's at our commissioning service at St Nicholas' Cathedral, at 7.30pm on Wednesday 3 May.

I hope this brief survey reminds you of some of the many things going on at St George's these days. I'm sure you can add more. It's good to have new things to get involved in, if you feel you have been doing the same things for too long. Likewise, new things tend to attract new people, people whose names are not already familiar from the rotas.

St George's mission is, to bring faith to life: in worship, in personal spirituality, and in outreach. If there's anything you think would be helpful to you in any of those areas, that we are not already doing, I promise we are not too busy to try.

Secretary's Report/From the Elders

Our Membership Roll now stands at 60. Since last year, five of our number have gone to be with their Lord- Margaret Haigh, Betty Smeaton, Edna Clark, Sarah Glendinning and May Spedding.

St George's has 9 Development Elders, who meet every month; 6 Pastoral Elders and 3 Pastoral Visitors. Your Development Elders are:-

Dorothy Barker, Sharon Cowey, Judith Das, Alison, Babs and Tony Hall, Sandra Nossiter and Peter Willox. We are delighted to welcome Alphonsi Solomon to the Eldership.

Your Pastoral Elders are Dorothy Coates, Lucy Cowey, Renee Croft, Audrey Matfin, Julia Watson. Ann Clough is welcomed to the Eldership .

Your Pastoral Visitors are Denise Fawcitt, Deborah Ward and Norman Nossiter.

We are also pleased to welcome Rev'd Dr Paul g Dempster as Associate Minister. Paul is a full time chaplain at Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals, and is not expected to lead worship on a regular basis, but we are indebted to him for his support and input to the meetings and services which is able to attend. It was a delight and honour to host his Ordination and Induction at St George's on June 4th last year.

All our Pastoral Elders and Visitors are now DBS checked, as required by law. (As are workers with young people and vulnerable adults). Safeguarding in our churches continues to be of paramount importance and each year we are now asked to complete a Synod Safeguarding Returns form to ensure that we carry out the necessary checks and keep up to date with guidelines. The Terms and Conditions of Hire of the premises have been reviewed and revised to take into account recent changes in national Safeguarding Policy.

The URC Past Case Review is inviting anyone with concerns about the behaviour or conduct of anyone affiliated with the URC since its formation in 1972 to raise them formally. We trust that God will guide us and grant us wisdom, sensitivity and open minds as the Review progresses.

The Evangelist Support Group was set up in early 2016 to assist our Evangelist Rob Wylie and encourage various events. Dorothy B, Jackie Haws, Judith Das, Grant and Paul are involved in this.

As I mentioned last year, the matter of Pulpit Supply is of some concern. There are to be more retirements of ministers this year, and as there are already vacancies in our Synod there will be more pressure on existing and retired ministers and lay preachers to fill pulpits and lead worship. Synod continues to discuss the Way Forward and it is likely that in the future, churches will share ministers more widely, in clusters. More lay people (i.e. not clergy) may be trained/asked to conduct funerals, weddings and baptisms. In the meantime we need to encourage and be so thankful to God for our Worship leaders who on a regular basis lead Praise worship. We also thank the many retired ministers and lay preachers who share God's message with us in our Traditional worship. And we thank the Elders who, when there is no preacher or a preacher has cancelled at short notice, arrange worship. We could do with more volunteers-not just Elders- to write or read a prayer, read the Bible passage, introduce hymns.

Please remember that it is the Church Meeting which makes decisions concerning the life of St George's. Make your opinion- and your vote count by attending the Church Meetings in January, April July and October. Only 4 times a year.

My thanks go to all our Development Elders, Pastoral Elders and Pastoral Visitors for the conscientious way in which they carry out their duties and visiting. And thank you to Grant, Kim, Olivia and Lexie for their contributions to the life of God's church here in High Heaton.

Dorothy Barker

Gift Aid Report

As John has already reported in 2016 we were able to claim a tax refund of £7968 under the Gift Aid Scheme. This amount included £6726 from Gift Aid where members/friends have completed Gift Aid declarations and £1242 from the Government Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme. The total amount was £571 lower than in 2015. We are grateful to those in our Fellowship who continue to support us via the Gift Aid scheme. In addition we were able to claim a further £250.00 tax refund for donations towards the Ugandan Orphanage/Bible Club 2016.

Sadly our membership continues to decline so we need to continue to maximise our income from the Gift Aid Scheme; particularly as we do not know how long the cash Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme will continue.

Once again may I **encourage any of our members or friends** who donates to St. George's, pays income tax and does NOT gift aid his/her donations **to complete a gift aid form**. If personal circumstances change and a donor ceases to pay tax or no longer pays sufficient tax for us to claim, the gift aid declaration can be cancelled. For this reason we normally only make an annual claim in May or June to allow our donors time to check whether or not he/she still pays sufficient income tax to cover all gift aid declarations he/she has made to any charity. **Anyone who has gift aided his/her offerings/donations and has ceased to pay sufficient income tax should contact me by the 30th April 2017 to ensure I do not make a claim on his/her donations for the tax year ended 05.04.2017.**

If you require any further information, need to check whether you have given an ongoing declaration, or require a gift aid declaration form please speak to me either at Church, by phoning 2669221 or sending me an email at dorothycoates3@gmail.com.

Your support for the Gift Aid Scheme forms a significant part of the income of St. George's and is much appreciated by the whole congregation.

Dorothy Coates

Treasurers Report

Available on request from the Church Secretary.

Property Report

Again this year we have managed to upgrade a number of facilities around our properties whilst maintaining the valuable income from the Manse letting.

There has been a number of minor expenditures on our Manse but nothing other than those you would expect from general wear and tear although the bathroom is very dated and may need replacing soon. We have renewed the current tenants tenancy for a further 12 months.

St Cuthbert's manse is undergoing works in the kitchen for which we will be responsible for a percentage which we expect to be in the region of £1600.

So far as our church building is concerned:-

We have survived the quinquennial report which requires a deal of input into all of Synod's searching property questions, so thanks to those who helped on that.

Main Hall – emergency lights have been replaced and additional emergency exit signs installed

Kitchen – emergency lights installed

Hall and Main door – emergency exit lights installed

Minor Hall – emergency exit light installed

Yard – emergency lighting installed

We've replaced the damaged carpet tiles in the church.

We've completed an asbestos survey of the Church, behind the organ and the halls and a small amount of material has been removed from the inner doorway leading into the loft area – the rest of the building is fine.

The fire alarm and emergency lights are now being tested twice a year.

The 5 yearly electrics test is due in 2018

Delighted to say we now have a new cleaner, Laura, who seems to be coping very well.

All in all we approach the fabric of our building with a mixture of proactive and re-active works and as such generally manage to keep on top of most things.

When finances allow we will complete the emergency exit signage in the Church.

Overall I'm delighted our buildings are now in such a condition that Finance can successfully let them out so successfully over the course of a week and the year, thereby bringing in much needed income to help, amongst other things, keep the buildings maintained.

As always sincere thanks to all members of the Committee who just get on and do without the need for any instruction and we see the benefit of this hard works especially in summer months when the gardens and lawns look so lovely.

A special mention to our electric guru Dennis who manages to deal with so many electrical conundrums despite his busy schedule of work elsewhere.

Thanks everyone who helps out in whatever way to making our buildings safe and beautiful – your efforts are really appreciated

Many thanks

Colin Wilkes

St George's Evangelist Report

I have really enjoyed meeting with the small group who are working with me to progress the work in St George's. This has allowed us to initiate a few new ideas for us as church to invite friends and family members along to. We started with a summer BBQ and games afternoon which followed on from a great cafe church; this was well received and we have another one planned for this summer. We also hosted our first ever 'Open Mic' night which had a great community feel about it, which got people into the sanctuary. This was a soft way to introduce the church to people. We are really excited to host our first 'Bake Off' event in a few weeks, and this has primarily been organised by members of the church with me in the background. We are looking forward to another autumn event in 2017, details of which will be coming out later in the year! I am looking forward to leading a few sessions at steps on mission and outreach, the details of which are already out. The small group idea of working on outreach has really been a help and I hope that an outreach meeting will continue to meet long after this post comes to a close. It has been a real catalyst for new ideas and energy.

Peace, *Rob Wylie*

Mission

Over the past year St George's has been involved in several missions to help other organisations (both local and far away) and also to help our outreach in the community.

During the course of the year, we were actively fund raising for Seeds of Hope, the charity to help orphanages in Uganda, culminating in sending Solomon, Beth and Inez with lorries of goodies (including a piano and bikes) to run a 2 week holiday club for the orphanages and local children. The fundraising included a quiz night, an afternoon tea and selling bracelets which were made by youth Church and other "crafty" volunteers. We have also begun fundraising for this year's trip, with a successful soup lunch and sweet sale.

We learnt a lot in the past year about the local organisation Junction 42- who help released prisoners to find jobs. We have members of the congregation who volunteer at Junction 42 and we donated the offering from our Christmas services to the organisation.

In the summer, several members of the congregation helped run Make Lunch sessions with other churches in the area, supplying children with hot meals during the summer holidays. There was a lot of planning involved, with recipes to learn and courses to take, but the sessions were successful and more are being planned for this year.

Over in the Youth section of our church, the Youth music group performed a selection of songs for a Christmas concert at a local Abbeyfield. Both traditional and new carols were sung and thoroughly enjoyed by all. They also organised the Christmas shoeboxes when gifts are sent to various countries.

Christmas also saw the launch of what is now Saturday Zone by running a crafts, chat and coffee session for children and their parents/carers to enjoy. There have now been 5 sessions (including Easter Saturday) and they have provided many new crafty ideas, many good conversations and forged new friendships.

Also at Christmas, the congregation rose to the challenge and knitted angels in their hundreds. These angels were added to the shoeboxes, and handed out at Junction 42's Christmas lunch, and the Abbeyfield. Finally they were given out at our Christmas services- and placed in various parts of the community.

As we do every year, we supported the People's Kitchen with our "Socks and Chocs" event as well as year long donations and giving our harvest collection of tinned food.

Alison Hall

Synod

Our new Synod Moderator Rev'd David Herbert, was inducted last September. He formerly ministered with the North Northumberland Group of Churches.

Synod continues to meet twice a year, in the spring and autumn. In the past year Synod has met at St George's Hartlepool and West End, Newcastle. It is the council of the URC which lies between General Assembly and the local church, and it is made up of ministers and lay representatives (often Elders) from each congregation. Visitors are always welcome to attend for all or part of the day, and have their say if they wish. When you hear that Synod is meeting, please remember those who gather in your prayers.

There is currently discussion about a proposed Synod strategy, the Way Forward. This is largely due to reducing numbers of ministers. For the church to be sustainable it needs to be done differently, with a greater emphasis on teamwork, lay leadership and Synod support.

Dorothy Barker

Contact

The Contact is not only the church's way of communicating with members and people on the community rota of St. George's, it is also a way of keeping in touch with members and friends who have moved out of the area, either for health reasons, to be nearer their families or for their jobs or education. They can still keep in touch with what we are doing either by friends or family sending the Contact to them or, if they are computer literate, on the church web site. It lets everybody know what is going on and keeps them up to date with all that we do.

I know that I keep banging on about having more articles or information about what is going on at St George's or in the surrounding area, and there has been some improvement, but it would be nice if I got more articles that can go in the 'Church Family Section' and articles about people's holidays. I know that people feel that their interests and holidays are not interesting to other people but I am sure that is not the case. Believe it or not, people do find things like that interesting, especially if you have difficulty getting out yourself; it's a picture on the world. Also if you have lost your partner there is nothing more soul destroying than being on your own. Having a number of friends and relatives who are now in this position I can attest to that, so I am sure this could be of some help to them.

I have said this before but it would be lovely to get articles from the youth of the church as I am sure they will have tales to recount which would be of interest, or more articles from Junior Church. As I say, I have been getting a few more things lately but I am sure more people have interesting tales to tell so please, please let me have more articles.

Sandra Nossiter

Contact Editor

Heaton Churches Together

The clergy and representatives from the churches in Heaton and High Heaton meet on a regular basis. They are St Teresa's (R.C.); St Gabriel's (C of E); Heaton Methodist; Heaton Baptist; St Cuthbert's LEP; St Silas's, Byker(C of E); St Francis's (C of E) and ourselves.

Both Fr Michael and Fr Paddy from St Teresa's celebrated their Golden Jubilees as priests during the year though shortly afterward Fr Michael moved to a pastorate in North Shields. Rev'd Diana MacNaughton from St Silas has now retired and moved out of the area, and Mark Elder from the Baptist church has also moved away. But it has been good to welcome Rev'd Janet Jackson to Heaton Methodist church, and Rev'd Robert Lawrence to St Francis's.

Martha and Mary's, a community café on Chillingham Road, is represented at Heaton Churches Together and relies on volunteers from our churches. (They could use more helpers!). The shop has been refurbished this year and in addition to a café it hosts such groups as the Heaton History group, Crafty Ladies, Parkinson's group. They regularly have special events such as a Strawberry tea afternoon, or Pie Day- always worth going along to!

The Women's World Day of Prayer- this year written by the women of the Philippines- , Lent Lunches (which raise money for Christian Aid), all give the opportunity to work together . The Walk of Witness on Good Friday started at Freeman Hospital, goes along Newton Road, Heaton Road and ended in our Open Air service of witness in Library Square, Byker.

Last September Heaton Churches held an Open House day at the churches along Heaton Road- a complimentary event to the Heaton Festival when the churches host the day in the park. This was to welcome the public into our churches and encourage people to feel that the churches are approachable and accessible, not just a closed shop for members. There were displays, activities, coffee and teas.

At Christmas 295 individual gift bags for the clients of the People's Kitchen were assembled. Families from our churches helped with the packing – it was a lovely atmosphere. Christmas Cards were handed out to passers by during carol singing outside Sainsbury's.

Heaton Festival takes place this summer on Saturday 24th June. Plans are well under way though funding is more difficult due to current cut backs amongst councils, church bodies and businesses.

Grant, Paul and I continue to represent St George's but there are times when we cannot attend meetings so it would be appreciated if anyone else could occasionally volunteer to attend in our place.

Dorothy Barker

Steps

Steps meets weekly in term time at 7p.m. on Wednesday evening. We start with refreshments and general chat then move on to singing favourite hymns. We are usually accompanied by Barbara on the keyboard or occasionally by Grant on the guitar. Then we read through and discuss one or more of the Lectionary readings from the previous Sunday. Grant goes through his sermon whether preached at St George's or St Cuthbert's and we have a wide ranging and often amusing discussion. We have a tendency to wander off the

point but often cover interesting ground. We conclude the evening with silent and spoken prayer. Both regular and occasional participants are very welcome to join us.

Jackie Haws

Singing group

Singing Group has continued to meet regularly on most Saturday mornings to get to grips with songs old and new for Sunday worship and enjoy a time of fellowship, praise and banter.

We are grateful to Barbara and Dorothy for leading the sessions and assisting us in learning much new material in recent times.

Grant has readily provided this and while some has been challenging, the group have risen to the task with good humour and enthusiasm and are quick learners.

We have recently welcomed Jeff and his excellent guitar skills have augmented those of our other talented musicians and helped us in our learning.

We have also joined with the young people on occasions, including at Abbeyfield at Christmas where the residents were entertained by an evening of Carols and Christmas music.

We are ever grateful to the Halls who regularly organise the tea and coffee we enjoy after a hard hour's singing!

Stewart Barclay

Church Flowers

Once again I want to say a huge THANK YOU to all our flower arrangers for the wonderful displays they create at the front of church. I'm sure you will all agree that we are blessed to have such talented and dedicated members providing us with fresh flowers in church every week.

We now have a team of five who take turns in creating the displays – Clare, Sandra, Dorothy B, Ivy and Karen. If there is any one reading this who would like to join the rota please get in touch.

There continues to be a list at the back of the church for people to put their names against a special date; this could be to celebrate a birthday, an anniversary, the memory of a loved one or just because you feel like it! Just pass your donation to me the week before with any special requests regarding colours, flowers, etc. and we will try to meet these.

For those newer members you may wish to know that after the Sunday service the flowers are taken, by the Elder on duty, to someone who needs cheering up or to let someone know we are thinking of them.

Thank you to everyone who makes a donation or gives their time to make our church look so lovely and welcoming.

Lesley Cadwallader

Women's Fellowship

The Women's Fellowship is open to all ladies-(and gents if they wish to come!). We meet on the last Tuesday of the month from 2pm until 3.30pm in the minor hall.

We start with a period of worship which includes Bible readings, prayers and singing songs or hymns. After this we sometimes have a speaker then finish with tea, biscuits and a chat. Some meetings we have a Magazine Day when ladies bring poems or other articles to share.

In the past we have invited Margaret Storey to tell us about Nicaragua and her work there with children and families. We have had a talk about a cruise around the Mediterranean; talks about life in Britain in the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's. We learned about shoe boxes which are filled with various items including toys, and crafts, which are sent to Africa and other places of need. We had a lady who talked about decorated egg cups and brought her collection to show us; then a lady came to talk about a collection of ladies' handbags and scarves.

Women's Fellowship has been running for many years and we welcome new members.

Deborah Ward

Junior Church / Youth Church

We meet every Sunday (even during the holidays). We have 12 Children who attend regularly and we are sometimes joined by visiting children to the church. We have 4 leaders and also a number of volunteers who are willing to lend a hand if we are ever in need.

We join the service for the first couple of songs then move through to the minor hall where we spend the next hour and a half doing different activities (coming back to join with the coffee break and then continuing with JC/YC during the traditional service).

We start each session with a prayer board - a time to discuss things that we want to pray about - either of a personal nature or worldwide. We end with a prayer for all we discuss.

We then move on to our activities. We do a number of different things each week, mainly following the lectionary, although we do cover other areas. The Junior church explore the bible through crafts, games and experiments while the Youth church have discussions about bible passages and how they relate to the world - often challenging the leaders with their questions and thoughts! They also enjoy the crafts and games.

During last year, we were heavily involved with fundraising for Seeds of Hope - having an afternoon tea and making bracelets, and sending messages of friendship to Uganda. We continue to build our friendship with the orphanages.

The young people enjoy the varied aspects of their Sunday morning - so much so that they would continue on well after the service is finished!

Alison Hall

Music Group

The youth music group has continued to meet on Friday evenings to share favourite songs together and learn new material. A highlight of the past year was performing Christmas carols for the residents at Abbeyfield care home last December. This was a lovely opportunity for our young people to share their gifts with the local community and the evening was well supported by members of St George's who came along to meet the residents and share carols with them. The youth music group have also learnt and performed songs written by church members, and have sang at our church services on several occasions throughout the year. The group provides an opportunity for the young people to develop their musical talents in a friendly and supportive environment whilst also extending their spiritual growth through praise songs and fellowship.

Marina Dodgson

Book Club

The group from St George's and St Cuthbert's meet every month on a Friday evening to discuss a book chosen the previous month. We are approaching our third year and have read an amazing range of literature. In addition, we enjoy the hospitality of the manse, sampling the refreshments everyone brings along and often moving from literary discussion to talking about many issues that arise from the books, -and some that do not!

Books, cake, fellowship! How can we fail? Everyone is welcome to come along and join us. For further details contact *Angela MacKenzie* (0191 2815631)

St George's Website www.stgeorgesurc.org.uk

On our website you will find information about us, our services, our weekly or monthly groups, and special events. Our weekly notices and prayer sheets are posted too, as is Contact. Several people receive Contact by email but you can also read it online.

There are links to take you to various sites- such as Northern Synod, Bible Society; more recently URC daily prayers and a reflection have been made available from our national URC - some of which have been written by ministers or retired ministers from our area.

If you would like to include anything on the website please contact the webmaster, Alan on alan@trinitymethodist.co.uk Every effort is made to keep our website up to date with current news and information; **but if you don't tell the Web Master about your event**, then it won't be advertised!

Dorothy/Alan Barker

85th Newcastle Brownies Report

Once again we have a full unit with a regular turnover of between 24 and 30 girls.

In 2016 we completed our Cooks advance badge which involved making an array of starters, main courses and desserts and included a trip to Sainsbury's where their education team explained the behind the scenes of supplying food and in running a supermarket.

We also completed the Unicorn Challenge badge as a unit. Some girls completed their cyclist, musician, swimming, hostess.

We also had our Celebration parties for girls moving on to Guides.

In addition to this we also have tried to get outside when possible and had our regular crafts and games sessions.

For the first time in many years we didn't get on Pack Holiday but we did manage an outings to Beamish Museum for Empire Day.

Fiona Wyatt (Leader in Charge)

100th Newcastle Scout Section Report

The Scouts have been involved in a number of activities with other Scout Groups in the District this year:

- Super Patrol competition; testing skills including map reading, pioneering, first aid and cooking. We came second!
- Dragon boat training and race against Gosforth Sea Scouts.
- Jamboree on the Trail; an annual National walk day for Scouts to get together
- Northumberland County 'Marra' camp in May 2016
- County 'Operation Twilight' event – an all-day game of cat and mouse in the countryside for 80 teams of Scouts and Explorers
- Northumberland County water activities weekend in October 2016
- Winter camp at Kielder in January 2017

In the hall we have been working on air activities, gaining the air activities and air researcher badges, along with the model maker badge for our model planes.

We are working more closely with Freeman Park and have adopted an area of path behind the pond for our group to maintain. We have been clearing debris and litter from the path, cutting back weeds and overgrowth and making and hanging bird feeders.

We are fundraising for a new minibus and held events towards this, including a 90th birthday party for the Queen in Freeman Park, a Christmas fair in the hall and carol singing in Eldon Square in December.

In the coming year, we expect to work on the astronomer and astronautics Scout badges and run an expedition for the older Scouts in June. We will be doing more work in Freeman Park and fundraising.

Suzanne Scarlett

Cub Report – 2016

Cub numbers are really high and increasing as beavers move up.

January saw cubs working on the D.I.Y badge, learning to work with tools, identifying different types of wood and joints. They made a Christmas decoration in December as part of the badge and finished by making a plague for hanging keys.

We started the Photographer badge, giving time to collect photos at upcoming events, camps and visit to Victoria Tunnel.

Cubs achieved the Scientist badge, experimenting with the effects of liquids on certain items, making a magnet, growing cress, learning about their body and pulse rate.

In February, the cubs had a weekend at Dukeshouse, outside Hexham. It was a fully packed program of activities including a blind trail, archery, zip wire, 3G swing and climbing. An excellent experience.

In March, cubs completed the Animal Lover badge. They had been keeping a diary showing how they looked after their pets at home. We had a visit from the Bug man, showing us a range of insects, spiders and snake.

In April, we looked at a new badge, the International badge. This meant researching scouts from other countries and seeing what differences there were, if any. We had a camp at Dilston and completed stage 3 of the Navigator badge. Cubs walked through Corbridge to the Roman fort for a visit.

In May, we tackled Our Skills Challenge badge and visited the County Marra camp. The camp is organised by the County and we spent 3 nights camping and taking part in all the activities. As it was the 100th year since Cubs began, a lot of the weekend was arranged for Cubs.

In June, cubs found out about Newcastle in order to gain their Local Knowledge badge. This involved a tour of the Victoria Tunnel in Ouseburn.

Once we returned in September after our summer break, we started 2 new badges, Environmental Conservation and Global Issues. We looked at endangered animals, recycling, renewable energy and much more.

In October, we were camping again, at West hall. We let cubs light fires and cook their lunch. We covered enough work for the Backwoods Cooking badge and the Chef badge. We had a visit to the beach and joined the beavers in activities, rock pool and sandcastles, then ice creams. On site there was an archery session for them to try.

The year end was spent getting ready for our evening with parents coming along, slightly different format this year. The final night was at the 10 pin bowling.

Mike Cox

Beaver Report

Beavers started the year with high numbers and continued to maintain this throughout the year.

Starting in January, beavers completed their Chef badge, looking at healthy eating, hygiene and safety. February saw the start of the Gardeners badge and planting of sunflower seeds.

Around Easter, time was spent on craft items, making Easter bonnets and card making.

In September, beavers grew cress, investigated magnets and conducted various experiments towards their Science badge.

In October, beavers had a sleepover at West Hall, near Whitburn where the cubs were camping for the weekend. They managed to complete their Outdoor Challenge badge and Adventure Challenge badge. This involved some scouting activities, pitching a tent, preparing a fire and knots. Work carried out included identifying leaves and insects and going on a bug hunt. They also completed the Camp Craft badge. On the Saturday they walked to the beach, played games, carried out a scavenger hunt and had a sandcastle building competition, rounded off with an ice cream. On site, beavers tried their hand at archery.

In the hall, beavers visited the church and looked at various religious activities and ceremonies. They wrote a prayer as part of their Faith badge.

The year finished with a trip to the panto and an evening for the parents.

Grahame Johnston

Proposed Agenda for the Church Annual General Meeting to be held on Sunday April 30th 2017 at 12 noon.

1. Constitute
2. Present/apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the previous Church Meeting on January 15th 2017
4. Matters Arising
5. Reports: Questions: Acceptance of Reports.
6. Finance Update
7. Property Update
8. Minister
9. Secretary/From the Elders: incl Church Bibles; Pre-school hours; Toddler group
10. Any Other Business

Date of the next meeting: **Sunday 16th July at 11.45 am.**

N.B. If you have any matters you'd like to raise, please give them to Dorothy Barker or Tony Hall, in advance of the meeting, so that they can be dealt with in AOB and answers available at the meeting. Anyone can raise their concerns, anyone can speak at church meeting, though only Church Members are able to take part in a vote.