

**April/May 2018**

# **CONTACT**

**The Magazine of  
St. George's United Reformed Church  
Newton Road, High Heaton,  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7HP**



**Easter Sunday  
The Empty Tomb**

## Thoughts from the Manse

It has been said, science answers the question of “How.” It cannot answer the question of “Why?” Scientists can theorise about *how* the universe began; they cannot and do not ask *why* it began.

The great physicist Stephen Hawking died this week. He was truly one of the great scientific minds of this century, yet also blessed with a self-deprecating sense of humour that let him send himself up in episodes of numerous sitcoms. In an episode of “The Simpsons”, he steals and takes credit for Homer's 'discovery' that the universe is doughnut-shaped.

Stephen Hawking's mind expressed itself naturally in equations. Someone who looked for truths that could be expressed with mathematical certainty inevitably did not have much time for religion. In his book *The Grand Design* (2010) he wrote, “It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touchpaper and set the universe going.” His quest was for a great unifying theory that would once and for all make deity redundant.

Yet everywhere we look in our experience there is mystery – and the sense of a supernatural force working for our good. “We know that for those who love God all things work together for good,” says Paul (Romans 8.28). Where does coincidence end and Providence begin? As Christians, can we really believe in both?

One cold, rainy night a team of Street Pastors met a group of young men, visiting the city for a big match next day. One of them was sitting on the wet pavement, outside a complex of bars and clubs. The Street Pastors naturally assumed at first he needed help to sober up, but when he began clutching his chest and moaning in pain, they realised something was seriously wrong.

They helped him up and took him into the foyer of the complex, where police officers were keeping an eye on the crowds. The police took over from the Street Pastors and soon had this young man laid on the floor, stripped of his shirt. By now he had stopped breathing, and one officer administered CPR while another prepared a defibrillator.

The Street Pastors tried to keep bystanders away from the scene, while reassuring the young man's friends; but it is hard to reassure someone, when your eyes are telling you the situation looks hopeless. Of course, they prayed. After agonising moments that seemed endless, he started breathing again, and was conscious and able to respond to questions by the time the ambulance arrived.

The odds seemed stacked against the young man that night. There were crowds of people around the entrance to the complex, and many things for the police to keep an eye on. His plight could easily have gone unnoticed. Normally at that time of the morning the Street Pastors would have been taking a break; but because of the rain, they had decided to go back to base to pick up hats and waterproofs, and save their cup of tea until later. For that reason only, they were there when the young man collapsed.

Why were Street Pastors there at that moment? Because God had brought them there. Why had God brought them there? Because he had a job for them. Why did God choose to save the life of that young man, when other young people die every day, all over the world? That question we cannot answer – but we believe he will always look back on that night as the night his life was spared, and we hope he will ask the most important question – why?

Why are any of us here? Because God has put us here. Why has he put us here? That question is harder to answer, but he has a plan and a purpose for each of us. He also has a plan for all of us collectively, as a church and as a community of his people. All we have to do see with fresh eyes what that plan is – and set to work together.

Your friend in Christ,  
*Grant*

## **Church Family News**

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you of the death of Jenny Proctor. Jenny had not been at church for quite some time due to ill health, though she was visited by her Elder and friends so we had been aware of how she was getting on. Our love and prayers go out to her family and friends.

### **Little Princess Trust - Sponsorship**

I am having over 40cm of my hair cut off and donating it to the Little Princess Trust. This is a charity which makes "real hair" wigs for children who have lost their hair due to cancer treatments or other illness.

I'm asking for sponsorship to raise funds for the charity, Fighting Ependymoma. My friend Liv lost her little brother Oliver to this awful brain cancer on Boxing Day. He was only 10 years old and had been through many treatments and surgeries since being diagnosed at only 5 years old.

Any donation no matter how small would be much appreciated. (If donating online I have a JustGiving page, if you search Ellie Hutton it will come up as "Hair Donation")

Please keep Oliver's family in your prayers.

Thank you  
*Ellie Hutton*

### **Andrew Barclay and Christian Union**

Some of you will know what I've been up to so far since graduation, but if you don't, I am currently working in St Andrews as a Relay Worker, helping the Christian Union out and being trained by UCCF (the organisation that looks after the CUs around the UK) and it's been a lot of fun so far, with only a few months left to go!

The aim of the CU is to give every student in St Andrews the opportunity to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus Christ! And so a big part of the CU's work is training and equipping the students to be doing evangelism in their everyday lives with their friends but also to run evangelistic events to reach out to those beyond friendship circles or as things to invite friends to.

As part of my Relay year I am receiving training in things like Bible Handling, Apologetics and Discipleship, and getting lots of opportunities to use these skills too! I've already had 2 of my 3 training conferences, with the last one approaching scarily fast. These have been so wonderful, especially getting to know the other Relay Workers from around the UK - they are a great bunch. I also just love the intensity of weeks or weekends away with such good teaching and training, so I'm excited for the last one, though I'm sure this will be bittersweet.

I am also being mentored by a full time member of staff from UCCF, Matty, who has been great and has challenged my learning about things and given me opportunities to run various small group sessions to give me experience in that! It has also been good learning from an older Christian, which is something I value more and more!

Another part of the year is the study programme. This focuses on the key doctrines of the faith and is often where I learn the most! It was probably the thing I was least looking forward to but has been one of the best parts of Relay. It has been great to think more about what I believe and why, and have real backing for why I believe it. There have been so many "wow" moments and I'll happily tell you about them when I'm around at church sometime. But I have just been seeing so much more of how God's plan for us is so intricate, essential and perfect. It has been mind-bending at points but God is complex so that's to be expected I suppose.

We also have the joy of meeting with students and reading the Bible with them so I have been meeting with a few guys individually, starting off going through Colossians, but now I'm doing Hebrews with one and Nahum with another, both of which bring different challenges but I'm loving it! This has really shown me how important good discipleship is, and how an older Christian investing in a younger one can see real fruit for all involved.

All CUs around the UK run some form of concentrated mission, be that over a couple of days or over a whole week, and as part of the Relay programme we help at a university outwith our town or city as well as our own CU's one. So I went across the water to Dundee to help with Abertay Uni CU mission's week which was fab!! They are a really small CU with about 5 regulars so this week was going to be different to how I had experienced Glasgow's missions weeks. The AUCU lot were great fun, and super keen to get involved with flyering and giving out tea and coffee! We held 8 events in total: 3 quizzes, 3 lunch events, a dial-a-doughnut (opportunity for people to ask questions and get a doughnut in return) and a question panel. There were quite a few people coming along including some Christians who just hadn't found the CU before, but also people who were genuinely interested in what we had to say!

Then 2 weeks after that St Andrews had their mission's week called "STORY". It was based in a huge marquee outside the library and we had a lunch event each day, the STORY cafe each afternoon and then various evening events throughout the week. Hundreds of people came to the marquee throughout the week and there were some great conversations with people interested in the Christian faith and we think a couple of people became Christians!! I ended up missing all of Tuesday-Friday of the week because I had some form of the flu or a bug or something, which was pretty gutting but the week (obviously), went on without me and was a real success! A follow up course has been running which has given people opportunities to further talk through their obstacles to becoming a Christian so please be praying for that!!

And so I only really have a few weeks left when the students will be around since most disappear as soon as exams are done! It is strange to think that the year is almost coming to an end, but I do still have lots more work to do and lots more to learn so I'm excited for that.

Thanks for all your prayers throughout this year - at no point have I felt that I have been doing this alone, knowing I have been supported in prayer by you and others around the country!

Andrew Barclay

### **Whose Move?**

On that day a couple of weeks ago when snow fell in Newcastle, a driver was attempting to manoeuvre his van up the steep ramp that leads into the Carloliol Square car park. His wheels spun on the ice, and he found himself helplessly stuck as a queue of cars built up behind him.

At that point, something unexpected happened: a rough sleeper came forward to help. He slid his one and only blanket under the van's rear wheels, and it gave the tyres enough grip to let the driver make his way up the ramp, into the car park. The homeless man acknowledged the driver's thanks with a wave, and went on to help others.

When the driver had parked his van and delivered his package, he came back to thank the homeless man again, and offer him food and a hot drink; but he was gone. His selfless act made a deep impression on that driver – the idea that someone could so generously give his all, sacrificing his warm blanket to help drivers of cars and vans, snug inside their comfortable vehicles, with the heaters blowing warm air.

The driver was moved to go online, asking people to donate sleeping bags, blankets and coats to help rough sleepers. The public response was generous, and he took the goods he had collected to a shelter to be passed on to those in need. He bought a new sleeping bag and kept it with him, until a few days later, out on his rounds, he spotted the homeless man who had helped him. He gave him the sleeping bag, and again thanked him profusely. The homeless man's response was short and simple: "I don't need praise. I went to help, just as others have helped me."

All are called to help people we see in need. There are many reasons why people end up on the streets: unemployment, debt, domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, bereavement, depression or other mental illness, gambling addiction, alcoholism or substance abuse. It is so easy to wash our hands by saying their problems are their own 'fault'. But all I can think is how can I turn away when God gave his all, sending Jesus, his only Son?

This is a new year, a new time of opportunity. How can we, you, I reach out to help someone in 2018? We might reach out with clothes, sleeping bags and blankets. We might reach out in other ways. It does not matter how old or young we are – everyone has something to do. At coffee time in church, a young girl saw the milk was running out. She popped out to the local shop, and spent her pocket money on another carton: she gave her all.

I want every one of us to ask, what does it mean, for us personally, to give our all? Let's think how we can reach out to others, and let's give it a name: let's call it, 'Whose Move?' Let's recognise where the urge to be generous comes from, because it comes from God. He might be telling us to buy someone a sandwich, hand them a sweater, give them a smile, or make a call to someone who is feeling lonely. Loneliness is a hidden epidemic.

Let's be challenged to let ourselves give in to the next generous impulse God plants in us.

Your friend in Christ  
*Carol Side*

## **BORING PERHAPS, BUT VERY NECESSARY FOR THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH SO PLEASE READ.**

### **Gift Aid Report.**

In 2017 we were able to claim a tax refund of £7210.42 under the Gift Aid Scheme. This amount included £6235.90 from Gift Aid where members/friends have completed Gift Aid declarations and £974.52 from the Government Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme. The total amount was £758 lower than in 2016 and this is the second year running the figures have reduced. 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 £225.00.00 tax refund for donations towards the Ugandan Orphanage/Bible Club 2017

An encouraging sign for 2018 is that the plate cash up to December 2017 had increased so that will benefit the claim for the government Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS). However, this scheme may be withdrawn at any time, so it is still preferable to have recorded gift aid declarations and donations particularly as only cash donations of £20 or less are eligible for GASDS.

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 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018 to ensure I do not make a claim on his/her donations for the tax year ended 05.04.2018.**

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](mailto: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.

Thank you *Dorothy Coates*

# Seeds of Hope

## Ceilidh

Join us for an evening of dancing and music!

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2018**  
**7pm (dancing from 7.30pm)**

**St George's URC, Newton Road**  
**High Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne**

**Suggested donation on the door:**  
**£5 adults, £3 children**

Bring your own refreshments/snacks  
(tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available)

*All proceeds from this event will go to our Seeds of Hope project, which supports work with orphans in Uganda.*



### Ceilidh in aid of Seeds of Hope

We will be holding another Ceilidh to raise funds for Seeds of Hope on Saturday 21st April from 7pm. Join us for an evening of dancing with live music and our fantastic dance caller, Tony. For more information, see Marina.

### 2018 Seeds of Hope Mission to Uganda

It seemed as though it was yesterday when the team went on our mission to Uganda. Time has come again to prepare ourselves for our 3<sup>rd</sup> mission.

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for the support and prayers and encouragement that have kept us going. We are all looking forward for the work ahead of us this summer as we shall run our holiday bible club in two centres. There is a lot of excitement from the children and our volunteers.

We hope you have been praying and probably would like to join the team this year. God willing the team goes on 23/07/18 coming back on 6/08/18

Since we plan to do two centres we expect the number of children to be more than 600. We give them 2 meals a day. We appeal for £5. This enables us to feed one child for a week. You can feed one or more children. All donations made to St Georges Church High Heaton

Please get involved by praying, plan to join the team or donating.

## **Collections: March – 21<sup>st</sup> July 2018**

This year we are collecting new and used shoes & new and used clothes (of all sizes).

For more information contact Solomon 07476456755

Thank you  
From all at Seeds of Hope.

## **Tiny Lives Nearly New Sales**



A big  
thank you  
to St  
George's  
for  
allowing  
us use of  
the minor



hall in March to sort through donations for the next Baby and Toddler Nearly New Sale in aid of Tiny Lives. These sales raise money for the special care baby unit at Newcastle RVI and we had amassed a significant backlog of donated clothes which needed to be sorted and priced ready for our next sale. Being able to bring a team of volunteers together in a warm, clean, carpeted hall made the task a lot easier than trying to sort through four large carloads of clothes in our homes over many evenings! Everything needed to be quality checked, sorted by item type and sorted by size. It was quite a task!

These sales take place four times a year at Trinity Church on Gosforth High Street and we have been organising these since Joseph (from Junior Church) was looked after in the special care baby unit when he was born. We sell a mix of clothes, toys and equipment for babies and toddlers and are always grateful if people can help spread the word about our sales (I have a box of flyers and posters if anyone wants some!). I am also a trustee of the Tiny Lives Trust, and it is a privilege to see the difference that the charity makes to babies and families at a very difficult time.

If anyone would like to know more about what we do, feel free to ask me. You can also find us at [www.tinylivesnearlynewsales.org.uk](http://www.tinylivesnearlynewsales.org.uk) or [www.facebook.com/tinylivesnearlynew](https://www.facebook.com/tinylivesnearlynew)

*Marina*

## **Kema's Story**

### **A Chance to hear about a life changed by God by Youth Church**

On a wintery March Youth Church and friends came to St George's to hear from Kema Kay the 23 year old actor and rapper. Kema performed but also spoke about his faith journey about everything he has gone through and how God was always there when there was no one else to turn to.

He told us how he had got involved in some bad things and gone through some really hard times where he felt very alone but that he trusted in God and his prayers were answered in amazing ways. God directed him to a Youth Project and he was able to use his gift of music. He has learnt to trust God and wait on him. Kema stayed behind for ages to chat with families. Thanks to John for great questions and organization. Kema we are praying for you and your work and hope to see you soon. In the words of DH it was 'pure banga'.

What stood out for Youth Church I  
When no one was there he could always turn to God  
He prayed before everything  
God answered prayer in amazing ways  
God has a plan for us!  
Things might not happen when you want them to - trust  
Don't need to change thousands if you make a difference to one person its important  
God spoke to some one give him what he needed - amazing  
So Down to earth  
Really nice.  
Music was brilliant - talent.

### **Volunteering in Junior/Youth church**

We are delighted to have such a fantastic group of young people regularly attending our junior and youth church groups on Sunday mornings. We follow the lexionary and are currently using resources from both Roots and Youth Alpha to create a programme of activities for our young people. Now that we have a wider age range, we are finding that working in three small groups (instead of two) best meets the needs of our young people. We would be very grateful for some extra volunteers to help us deliver this, particularly during the early part of the session up to the coffee break. If you do not want to commit to every week, or to be involved in the planning side, you could still join us as an Assistant (instead of a Leader). For more information, please speak to Kim or Marina.

### **Nappy Appeal**

Tabitha's Place is a 'children's clothes bank' that runs from The Gateway Church in Benwell. They collect donations of children's clothes (up to 12 years) and pass these on to local families in need at their weekly drop in session. They are often asked for nappies, and in response to this have launched a nappy appeal to collect nappies which they can give away to families who need them. If anyone would like to contribute to this appeal, please bring nappies (any size) in to church and we will arrange to pass these on.

### **Why Fairtrade invests in the farmers and workers of tomorrow**

**by Mike Gidney, Fairtrade CEO**

When Fairtrade began, more than twenty years ago, we were a response to the scandal of poverty in global supply chains. In a world that was eagerly embracing globalisation – with the promise of more choice and cheaper prices for consumers – it was hard to find a big company that paid any attention to their social and environmental footprint. Farmers and workers really were out of sight and out of mind. Fairtrade was determined to change that, to bring the people behind the products into sharper focus so that they could exercise their right to be heard and increase their influence over their trade. Poverty does not just deny people a livelihood, in too many cases it also denies them a voice – the opportunity to speak out about their needs and hopes and to have a say in the way the world is run. As Maya Angelou famously wrote, “A caged bird stands on the graves of dreams.”

While some companies were ignorant of the men and women working in their supply chains, often for poverty wages and in appalling conditions, Fairtrade has always championed the voices of those people. We recognised this as a means of ensuring empowerment from day one. Our view from the outset has been that the fight against poverty starts with those who themselves are in poverty. In recent years inequality – of voice as well as income – has been identified by powerful groups, from the World Economic Forum to the IMF, as a major threat to global stability.

To become Fairtrade certified, farmers and workers are expected to be organised into groups and to be able to prove their organisations are well-run, democratic and transparent. Representative decision-making is more than a just nice to have, over the past twenty years it has ensured that producers decide how to invest their profits according to local priorities.

Fairtrade is well-known for ensuring that, in addition to a minimum price for their goods, producer organisations receive an additional premium investment which they decide among themselves how to spend. Over the years this has helped transform communities – from improving food security through enabling farmers to hedge against the price of maize to bringing water and power into producers' homes and villages.

More than €117 million of Fairtrade Premiums were generated last year from global Fairtrade sales – there is a generation of farmers and workers in 75 countries who are now less likely to go hungry, are more able to access decent healthcare and education, and have at the same time been able to invest in their farming futures.

Increasing producers' confidence, through having a voice and taking control, is not just good for the farmers and workers themselves. It also helps ensure strong farming communities who in turn become better suppliers and longer-term business partners. Putting farmers first is good for business. In a recent study of banana farmers in Colombia, 98% of them said they felt more confident about their farming futures because of Fairtrade. The clear financial terms that producers see through Fairtrade enables them to plan, to take risks, to invest in farms and communities. Outside of Fairtrade, that confidence falls to just 9%. There is no incentive for producers to take such risks if they have no sense of what the price of next year's harvest will be. Price volatility is an ever-present threat to producers: this year alone the global cocoa price has fallen by 30%, a pattern also seen over recent years in coffee, tea and cane sugar.

But the most inspirational impacts of Fairtrade are also the most subtle, and are inextricably linked to producers having a voice. Kuapa Kokoo, the Ghanaian smallholder cocoa farmers who supply Divine Chocolate among others, say "Fairtrade has made us players". The right to earn and control premiums has enabled producers to strengthen their negotiating position and look global brands and retailers in the eye as equals. Fairtrade has helped producers become price setters, not just price takers.

The strong community-based organisations at the heart of Fairtrade have also ensured that the rights of others have been heard, even on issues that would traditionally have been taboo. By having local control, producers have responded to needs that would not otherwise have been raised. For example, girls in the Athi River district of Kenya were repeatedly missing school because they had no money for sanitary towels, so Harvest Flowers, the local Fairtrade producer organisation, provided for the school headmistress to give out free sanitary towels to girls who came to school. The results go beyond attendance – not only did it end absenteeism due to periods, but it also changed the attitude of the boys to the girls, giving the girls more confidence and improving their authority in the classroom.

In many ways we are just getting started in Fairtrade, and we are constantly learning, but we are building on incredibly strong community foundations laid over the past twenty years. As producer organisations grow, as they take care of their basic needs, so we can see a new generation of social enterprises beginning to emerge, led with confidence by farmer and worker leaders. More and more groups are investing their premiums in added value activities such as processing (sugar smallholders in Paraguay, tea farmers in Kenya, coffee producers in India) and diversification (Swaziland sugar, West African cocoa).

And many are giving their children more choice by investing in education: I remember meeting a worker on a banana plantation in Colombia, selling to a major UK supermarket, who told me his producer group had used some of their premiums to fund him to study accountancy at night school. He was in his third year and about to graduate. His dream had been to get out of working on a plantation and his community had listened to him and enthusiastically backed him.

And this approach has ensured that marginalised groups are also represented which is important when the rights of so many workers in supply chains are ignored, particularly if they are migrant workers, women, or both. This is an exceptionally difficult problem to tackle, but Fairtrade works hard to ensure that our hired labour standards are best in class.

In India's Tamil Nadu region one of the areas workers at United Nilgiri Tea Estates Company Limited decided to invest in was education, meaning that children across 27 villages benefit from quality IT, science and English teaching and many former students have graduated and gain employment in IT and engineering. This is an industry renowned for trapping tea workers in indentured labour but the Fairtrade system has enabled communities to invest in the next generation.

Fairtrade is twenty years ahead on empowerment – we are still the only standards system to be 50% owned by producers. At every level in the Fairtrade system farmers and workers have the opportunity to make decisions, and not just at the local level. Producers sit on our Boards, they share responsibility for maintaining Fairtrade's standards and impact. They will be present in great number this month at Fairtrade International's annual General Assembly in Germany.

Global sales of Fairtrade now top \$7bn a year. To base this on the needs and voice of poor and marginalised producers seemed reckless to many when we started. Big business had rarely operated that way. The next generation of consumers are clear they want to see more transparency and accountability from big business. Where better to start than by being owned by the men and women who grow the products we buy?

*Fairtrade Foundation blog*

### **Local Mission and Ministry Review (LMMR)**

As I mentioned in the last Contact magazine, St George's is to be reviewed through the Local Mission and Ministry Review process. Work has begun to look at and update some aspects of our Pastorate Profile in preparation for this.

Our Pastorate Partner, Mr Tim Nelson is planning to visit the premises, meet with the Elders, and then with Church Meeting, to complete his part of the Review. At the moment, the date for this has not been confirmed, but it is likely to be either Thursday May 17<sup>th</sup> or May 24<sup>th</sup>. It would be good if as many members as possible could come along to the Church Meeting then, to give their views on what is happening at St George's. Times will be given later.

DJB  
Church Secretary

### **Points to Ponder**

- Let the manner of your ministry be your conduct, friendship, commitment, joy and peace, and preach them at all times. And if necessary, use words.
- Just because my path is different, doesn't mean I'm lost.
  
- In a world where you can be anything, be kind.
- An act of kindness is priceless to a discouraged individual. Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope to all those weary in heart; with God on our side and Love in our heart, we DO make a difference.
- Dear God, you've forgiven me so many times and blessed me in so many ways. I just wanted to say Thank you! Amen.
- Dear God, today I give you all of me....all of my situations, all of my stress, all of my anxiety, all of my fears. Please guide my way and give me your peace.

- You may be fighting some serious battles right now. But, the good news is that God is bigger than anything you're facing. Never lose hope!
- When you are down to nothing, God is up to something.
- Thank you, God, for another beautiful day and for choosing me to be part of Your plan.
- Grace is when God gives us good things that we don't deserve. Mercy is when He spares us from bad things we deserve. Blessings are when He is generous with both. God is good all the time!
- Leave footprints of kindness wherever you go.
- Home is not where you are from, it is where you belong. Some of us travel the whole world to find it. Others find it in a person.
- God's peace will not only come into your heart in prayer, but will bring stability into your entire being.

*The above are mostly from the Internet and cannot be attributed to any particular author.*

### **Christenings!**

In 1900 the Duck family lived in Ramsbury Manor, England. When it was time for their third son to be christened, the mother chose the name William. Unfortunately the father was too ill with gout to go to the church, so he told the nanny to name him plain Bill. The nanny gave this name to the vicar and the poor baby was christened Plainbill Duck.

Many years ago a baby was taken to be christened in Peckham, South East London. The parents and godparents arrived at the church but they still hadn't agreed on a name. When the vicar said, "Please name this child" one friend said, "John"; another disagreed saying, "Oh, no!". As no one else said anything, the poor baby was duly christened Ono Tichiner.

"I definitely want Brooklyn to be christened, but I don't know into what religion yet" (said a certain famous footballer in a TV interview).

A few years ago, a popular baby website conducted some research into the most unfortunate names in Britain. Here are their results.....

Helen Back; Terry Bull; Tim Burr; Rose Bush; Pearl Button; Barry Cade; Justin Case; Mary Christmas; Chris Cross; Sonny Day; Barb Dwyer; Teresa Green; Ray Gunn; Doug Hole; Jo King; Lee King; Hazel Nutt; Max Power; Will Power; Stan Still; Paige Turner; Anna Sasin.

*With thanks to [www.thebabywebsite.com](http://www.thebabywebsite.com) and "Bloopers and Blessings" published by the Leprosy Mission.*

<b><u>Sunday Service Date</u></b>	<b><u>URC Lectionary Readings 2018 Year B</u></b>
01-April-18	Acts 10 vs 34-43 (or Isaiah 25 vs 6-9), Psalm 118 vs 1-2, 14-24 1Corinthians 15 vs 1-11 St. John 20 vs 1-18 or Mark 16 vs 1-8
08-April-18	Acts 4 vs 32-35, Psalm 133, (or Isaiah 65 vs 17-25) Psalm 3, 1 John 1 vs 1-2: & chapter 2, St. John 20 vs 19-31

15-April-18	Acts 3 vs 12-19, Psalm 4 (or Isaiah 6 vs 1-9a) Psalm 40 vs 1-5, 1 John 3 vs 1-7, Luke 24 vs 36b- 48
22-April-18	Acts 4 vs 5-12, Psalm 23 (or Zechariah 10) Psalm 80 vs 1-7, 1 John 3 vs 16-24, St John 10 vs 11-18
29-April-18	Acts 8 vs 26-40, Psalm 22 vs 25-31, (or Exodus 19 vs 1-6) Psalm 118 vs 19-25, 1 John 4 vs 7-21, St John 15 vs 1-8
06-May-18	Acts 10 vs 44-48, Psalm 98 (or Genesis 35 vs 9-15) Psalm 101, 1 John 1 vs 1-6, St John 15 vs 9-17
13-May-18	Acts 1 vs 15-17, 21-26, Psalm 1 (or Jeremiah 10 vs 1-10a,) Psalm 108, 1 John 5 vs 9-13, St John 17 vs 6-19
20-May-18	Acts 2 vs 1-21, (or Ezekiel 37 vs 1-14) Psalm 104 vs 24-34, 35b, Romans 8 vs 22-27 (or Acts 2 vs 1-21), St John 15 vs 26-27, 16 vs 4b-15
27-May-18	Isaiah 6 vs 1-8, Psalm 29, Romans 8 vs 12-17 and St. John 3 vs 1-17
03-June-18	1 Samuel 3 vs 1-10 (11-20), Psalm 139 vs 1-6, 13-18, (or Deuteronomy 5 vs 12.15) Psalm 81 vs 1-10, 2 Corinthians 4 vs 5-12, Mark 2 vs 23- chap 3 vs 6
10-June-18	I Samuel 8 vs 4-11 (12-15) 16-20 (ch 11 vs 14-15) Psalm 138 (or Genesis 3 vs 8-15) Psalm 130, 2Corinthians 4 vs 13- ch 5 vs 1, Mark 3 vs 20-35

And Jesus said unto the theologians, “Who do you say that I am?”  
They replied, “You are the eschatological manifestation of the ground of our being, the  
kerugma of which we find the ultimate meaning in our interpersonal relationships”  
And Jesus said, “What?....”

*Oscar Romero; www.Kissingfish*

	<u>St George's Coffee Rota</u>		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Set up</u>	<u>Serve</u>	<u>Clear Away</u>
01/04/2018 Easter Sunday 10.30 Service	Ann and Renee	Ann and Renee	Fiona
08/04/2018	Tony and Babs	Tony and Babs	Fiona
15/04.2018	Solomon and Youth Church	Solomon and Youth Church	Solomon and Youth Church
22/04/2018	Clare	Clare and Sandra	Fiona
29/04/2018	Clare	Clare and Sandra	Fiona

**Please see Marina for dates for May and June.**

### **Bible a Month: Central African Republic**

#### ***“God lifts the poor and needy from dust and ashes” Psalm 113.7 (CEV)***

The Central African Republic is a landlocked country in central Africa, surrounded by South Sudan, Sudan, Chad, Cameroon, Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It covers an area of 622000 sq km, which is approximately 2.5 times larger than the UK. It has a population of 5.6 million, which is 9% of the UK. The Literacy Rate, people who can read and write, is 36.8%. French is the official language but there are other local languages.

The CAR is a dangerous place. Tensions are high due to the ongoing conflict between Muslim and Christian militia groups. Highly lucrative diamond, gold and oil mines are at the centre of the fight for control. Violence, looting and kidnappings are widespread. Three-quarters of people live in extreme poverty.

Bible Society has been doing what it can to keep providing God's Word throughout the years of war, but conditions are extremely difficult. Electricity is only available for three hours a day. The freight containers where Bibles are stored often leak. Our nine staff share a tiny office.

In 2018, more of your regular gifts will support this struggling team- and provide the Bible to people who need it. We'd like to buy three motorbikes to distribute Bibles round the country, create a proper Bible distribution centre and sales kiosk, and invest in fledgling literacy work among women.

## Prayer Pointers

- Pray for peace in this war-torn nation. Ask that God will intervene to bring order and stability, and restore the hearts of people damaged by violence and trauma.
- Give thanks for the resilience and commitment of our team in CAR. They tell us, "There are places we can't go. But we want to share the Bible in the places we can go" Pray God will use them as tools in his reconciliation work.
- Pray that Ken Dachi, Bible a Month's programme adviser for Africa, can offer active and practical support which will help the local team share God's word more widely.
- Pray for the 20 women attending our literacy class in CAR; pray that their lives will be transformed as they learn this vital life skill, and their faith will be strengthened as they read the Bible for themselves.

*Thank you so much for your support which is bringing the Bible to life at home and around the world.*

## Northern Synod Prayers

We are asked to pray for the following churches, and people associated with Northern Synod.

**N.B.** LEP= Local Ecumenical Partnership.  
PCM= Presbyterian Church of Mozambique.

### April

- 1<sup>st</sup> PCM, its congregations in and around the capital Maputo. Darlington Methodist Chair, Rev'd Ruth Gee.
- 8<sup>th</sup> St Andrew's URC, Blackhill; Bethel URC, Chester-le-Street; Christ Church URC, Stanley.
- 15<sup>th</sup> St George's URC, High Heaton; St Cuthbert's LEP (Methodist/URC), Heaton; Rev'd Dr Grant Wilson.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> St Mark's URC, Amble; Rev'd Alison Mills. The work of Children & Youth committee and for its convenor, Mr Sandy Ogilvie and Synod Children's Work Adviser, Mrs Hannah Middleton.
- 29<sup>th</sup> PCM, ministers in training at Ricatia Ecumenical Seminary. The RC Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle, the Rt Rev'd Seamus Cunningham.

### May

- 6<sup>th</sup> Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner, Mrs Barbara Allen, and our resource of lay preachers across our synod.
- 13<sup>th</sup> The work of Christian Aid and for generous giving during Christian Aid Week, 13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>.
- 20<sup>th</sup> Grindon Mission Project; Boldon URC; St Bede URC, Stockton Road URC; Roker URC, Sunderland. Rev'd David Whiting
- 27<sup>th</sup> Mrs Geraldine Sands, our Safeguarding officer shared with Yorkshire synod.

### June

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Environment Sunday. Trinity LEP (Methodist/URC), Gosforth; Rev'd Peter Holwell (Methodist) And Ms Mary Bellshaw (Community Worker) who are part of the ministry team there. Chair of Newcastle Methodist District, Rev'd Stephen Lindridge.
- 10<sup>th</sup> PCM, the churches in the Limpopo presbyteries in and around Gaza Province. The Anglican Bishop of Berwick, the Rt Rev'd Mark Tanner.

## What is the United Reformed Church?

The URC is a group of Christian churches across England, Scotland and Wales and has around 53,000 members in 1426 congregations, with more than 600 active ministers.

### Background

The name United Reformed reflects our roots in the Reformation. This began in 1517 after Martin Luther published his “95 Theses” attacking papal abuses. The “Reformed” part of our name also reflects our continual aim of reforming ourselves to be a Church for the present day.

The United Reformed Church Act of 1972 formally merged the Presbyterian Church of England and the Congregational Church in England and Wales. The denomination expanded when the Churches of Christ joined us in 1981, and the Scottish Congregationalists in 2000.

The URC is a nonconformist Church. This means we are not an “established” Church, with a formal link to civil authority as the Church of England and Church of Scotland have. We are committed to working closely with Churches of all traditions, in prayer and social action, and many of our local churches are now united with local churches from other traditions.

### What we believe

We believe that in the Bible we can hear the Word of God, still speaking to us today, and that each of us can find fulfilment through loving and serving Jesus Christ.

The URC embraces a wide variety of opinions. At the same time, in the words of our “*Statement of Nature, Faith and Order*”, together we are committed to “God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit- the living God, the only God, ever to be praised”

We are proud to be an intercultural Church, where people with varied ethnic and cultural roots enrich one another’s Christian living. All posts in the URC, voluntary or paid, are open to both men and women. We were pioneers in ordaining women- our first female minister was ordained in 1917.

More information on our core beliefs can be found at <http://bit.ly/urcbelief>

### Our structure

The URC has a democratic three-tier structure:

1. Local church congregations: they hold meetings to govern their affairs. Each church has local leadership from elected elders, but the Church Meeting of members is the main decision-making body at local level.
2. Synods: there are 13 synods- the national synods of Scotland and Wales plus 11 regional synods across England. Each provides oversight of regional matters and is led by a Synod Moderator. The Northern Synod Moderator is Rev’d David Herbert. Synod Office, situated in College Lane, Newcastle, serves the synod, supports the Moderator, Officers and Committees, encourages communications, and provides advice and information for local churches and others.
3. General Assembly- is the URC’s ultimate decision-making body. It meets biennially to celebrate, discuss and make decisions on the life and work of the denomination. Mission Council is the executive body of the General Assembly and meets twice a year.

**Sunday worship** is at the centre of church life but local churches also offer a variety of community activities. For details of our church at St George’s, ask the minister or church secretary, or check out our website on [www.stgeorgesurc.org.uk](http://www.stgeorgesurc.org.uk)

## Becoming a member

People sometimes ask whether they need to “join” their church and “become a member”. This is not essential but, for those who decide to take this step, it can deepen the sense of belonging. The URC encourages regular attendees to consider church membership when they start to think of a particular church as “their church”. Church members commit to supporting the church through giving, through action and by taking part in the Church Meeting, as well as regular attendance at public worship.

If you would like to know more about becoming a member, please do speak to the minister, Rev'd Dr Grant Wilson (0191 265 4113) or any of the Elders- they will be delighted to answer any questions.

For URC books and resources: [www.urcshop.co.uk](http://www.urcshop.co.uk)

For more information: [www.urc.org.uk](http://www.urc.org.uk)

*Information taken from a (2017) leaflet produced by the URC called “What is the United Reformed Church?”*

***“Being “Reformed” means that we delight in exploring the Bible, we do not fear change, and we try to run our churches in ways that take everyone’s insight and contribution seriously”***

## Points to Ponder

- If you don’t have a vision, you remain stuck in what you know. And the only thing you know is what you’ve already seen.
- True masters are those who have chosen to make a life rather than a living.
- There will always be a reason why you meet people. Either you need them to change your life, or you’re the one that will need to change theirs.
- Just because a person smiles all the time doesn’t mean that their life is perfect. That smile is a symbol of hope and strength.
- A negative thinker sees a difficulty in every opportunity. A positive thinker sees an opportunity in every difficulty. *Zig Ziglar*
- It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change. *Charles Darwin.*
- The planet does not need more “successful people”. The planet desperately needs more peacemakers, healers, and restorers. *Dalai Lama*
- Good deeds aren’t done by walking into a church. They’re done by walking out and helping others.
- Worship is an incredible privilege, not a religious duty. *Chris Tomlin*
- Stress can destroy much more than just our physical health. Too often, it eats away at our hope, belief and faith. *Charles F Glassman.*
- Maybe your life is not falling apart; maybe it is falling together. Don’t fearfully hold onto what needs to end. The familiar life crumbles so the new life can begin.
- Start by doing what is necessary; then do what is possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible. *St. Francis.*
- If you don’t leave your past in the past, it will destroy your future. Live for what today has to offer, not what yesterday has taken away.

*Most of these quotes are freely available on the Internet and cannot always be attributed to a particular person.*

## Diary for April/May 2018

### April

1 <sup>st</sup>	6.30 am	Easter Dawn service in Heaton Park. Followed by breakfast at St Teresa's.
1 <sup>st</sup>	10.30 am	<b>Easter Day</b> - All Together Worship led by the minister. To include Holy Communion.
8 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Praise worship led by Alphonsi Solomon
	11.00 am	Traditional worship led by Mr Ken MacKenzie, Methodist Circuit Steward
15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>10.30 am</b>	Altogether Worship led by Jim Grieve and John Smee.
15 <sup>th</sup>	11.45 am	Church Meeting- to include some reports from groups within the church.
21 <sup>st</sup>	7.00 pm	Ceilidh
22 <sup>nd</sup>	10.00 am	Praise worship led by Judith Das
	11.00 am	Traditional worship led by Rev'd Dr Tony Haws, retired URC minister.
28 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	Saturday Zone
29 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Worship led by the minister, Rev'd Grant Wilson.

### May

2 <sup>nd</sup>	7.30pm	Heaton Churches Together meet at Heaton Methodist Church.
6 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Worship led by the minister, Rev'd Dr Grant Wilson. Holy Communion during Traditional worship.
	11.45 am	Soup/Cheese lunch in aid of Christian Aid.
13 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Praise worship led by June Holmes, a former member of St George's.
	11.00 am	Traditional worship led by Rev'd Ruth Crofton, retired URC minister.
17 <sup>th</sup>	7.00 pm	Development Elders meet. May include Visit from LMMR Pastorate Partner and be followed by a Church Meeting. To be confirmed.
20 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Pentecost Sunday. Worship led by Rev'd Dr Grant Wilson.
	2-4pm	Picnic in the Park (Heaton Park). Organised by Heaton Churches Together.
26 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	Saturday Zone
27 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Praise worship led by Sharon Cowey
	11.00 am	Traditional worship led by Rev'd Peter Moth

### June

3 <sup>rd</sup>	10.00 am	Worship led by Rev'd John Paul, retired URC minister. Holy Communion during Praise worship
10 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Praise worship led by Harry Fawcitt
	11.00 am	Traditional worship led by Mr Peter Waugh, member of Trinity Church Gosforth.

#### Dates for Articles for June/July 2018 Contact

15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 Hard Copies  
20<sup>th</sup> May 2018 Emails

**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 Mr Harry Fawcitt, telephone number 2403129.

## Duty Rotas

	April				
	1 <sup>st</sup> <b>Easter Sunday</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup>
Duty Elder	Mr. T. Hall	Miss A. Hall	Mrs S Nossiter	Mr. E. Solomon	Miss D Coates
Door Steward	Volunteers Needed	Mrs. J. Das & Mrs. L. Cadwallader	Mrs Matfin & Mr Armstrong	Mr & Mrs T. Hall	Miss M. Foster & Mrs J. Cartman
Communion Stewards	Mrs S. Cowey & Mr. Solomon				
Computer Rota Setting up	Stewart Barclay	Sandra Nossiter	Stewart Barclay	Sandra Nossiter	Bob Renton
Computer Rota Operating	Stewart Barclay	Harry Fawcitt	Anthony Armstrong	Sandra Nossiter	Bob Renton
Sound Desk		Norman Nossiter		Norman Nossiter	
Offering Counting	Audrey Matfin	Denise and Harry Fawcitt	Sandra and Norman Nossiter	Ivy and Bob Renton	Sharon and Steve Cowey
Flower Donations	Judith Das	Angela Mckenzie	Dorothy Cowey	Jean Cartman	Joan Foggin
Flower Arranger	<b>Easter Sunday</b> Ivy Renton	Sandra Nossiter	Karen Wilkes	Clare Hutton	Dorothy Barker
Flower Distribution	Jean Cartman	Renee Croft	Julia Watson	Audrey Matfin	Denise Fawcitt

**If you are unable to do any of your duties, or they clash with something else you are doing in church, please arrange your own swaps in advance. Please do not leave it till the day of your duty as it is not always possible to get replacements on the day.**

## Duty Rotas

	May				June	
	6 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
Duty Elder	Mrs. L. Dixon	Mrs R. Croft	Miss A. Clough	Mrs D. Barker	Mrs S. Cowey	Mrs J. Das
Door Steward	Mr & Mrs H. Fawcitt	Mr & Mrs S. Cowey	Miss D. Coates & Miss A. Clough	Mrs E. Cowey & Miss M. Applegate	Mr and Mrs R. Renton	Mrs J. Das & Mrs. L. Cadwallader
Communion Stewards	Mrs Barker & Mrs. Bradley				Mr. Hall & Miss Clough	
Computer Rota Setting up	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed
Computer Rota Operating	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed
Sound Desk	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed	To be Agreed
Offering Counting	Audrey Matfin	Denise & Harry Fawcitt	Sandra & Norman Nossiter	Ivy & Bob Renton	Sharon & Steve Cowey	Audrey Matfin
Flower Donations	Anthony & Fiona Armstrong	Angela McKenzie	Norman & Sandra Nossiter	No Donor at time of printing	No donor at time of printing	Renee Croft
Flower Arranger	Ivy Renton	Sandra Nossiter	Karen Wilkes	Clare Hutton	Dorothy Barker	Ivy Renton
Flower Distribution	Lilian Willford	Ann Clough	Norman Nossiter	Dorothy Coates	Julia Watson	Deborah Ward

**If you are unable to do any of your duties, or they clash with something else you are doing in church, please arrange your own swaps in advance. Please do not leave it till the day of your duty as it is not always possible to get replacements on the day.**