

December 2018 / January 2019

CONTACT

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



Unto us a child is born.

Thoughts from The Manse

It's Friday afternoon as I write this, and tonight I will be out in town with Newcastle Street Pastors. Alcohol and drugs create the mood and set the tempo of the 'night time economy'. The problems they cause are our main challenge.

People setting out on the town glow with the euphoria of the first drinks. One round follows another as drinkers try to hold on to that initial euphoria, but very soon the depressive effects of alcohol take over, and people grow increasingly slow, befuddled and clumsy. The carefully put-together outfits become dishevelled, shoes are removed or lost together. Phones are dropped and broken. Handbags, carelessly carried, tip their contents on the pavement. People trip, topple, sit propped up against walls or lie in doorways. Inhibitions slip: couples kiss and paw one another; some individuals grow aggressive and lash out.

When we have to help a vulnerable person, it does not usually make much difference what they have taken, with one proviso. If they have only consumed alcohol, we can probably get them into a taxi once they have drunk some water, vomited up whatever their body has not already absorbed, and walked around a bit.

If the person we are helping, or the friends they are (hopefully) with, admit they have taken other drugs, alarm bells ring. They might think they know what they have taken, but there is no way of knowing what substances street drugs contain – not even so-called 'legal highs', now banned, but once sold openly. If we have any suspicion someone has taken a controlled substance, and their condition is causing concern, there is no other option than to take them to the St John's ambulance always stationed by St Nicholas' Cathedral, or ring 999 ourselves.

In the background, in the shadows, are those who have been doing this longest: the ones without a home to go to, the ones we refer to as 'street friends'. Abuse of drugs and alcohol are among the reasons they end up here, and drugs and alcohol help keep them trapped. Yet by dint of hard experience, they are often the ones with most insight into the problems of addiction, the clearest view of the slippery slope. Others come out to escape routine; for anyone dependent on drugs or alcohol, addiction is itself a life-ruling routine.

Street Pastors undergo comprehensive training, and one session is dedicated to the problems of substance abuse in its ever-changing forms. I attended a further course at the Civic Centre last week, and am now qualified to train others on these issues.

If there was one new message I took away from the course, it was the sheer cynicism of the drinks industry. Marketing concentrates either on the sophistication of the premium end, or the supposed fun and freedom of young people having fun together. The reality is different.

Certain drinks, like certain drugs, are most associated with long-term abuse and the most serious harm. Frosty Jack's strong white cider is one of the top-five selling ciders in the UK, the second most popular for take-home drinking. Each three-litre bottle, selling for £3.70, contains nearly as much alcohol as a whole bottle of vodka. Charities have asked for it to be banned, because its price makes it so accessible to under-age drinkers.

In Scotland, minimum alcohol unit pricing nearly trebled the price of strong white cider overnight this year. Drinks companies fought the legislation all the way to the Supreme Court. Aston Manor, the makers of Frosty Jack's, responded with fury to the increase, claiming those who drink Frosty Jack's are "typically moderate drinkers on low incomes." But the new policy is predicted to reduce alcohol-related deaths in Scotland by 392 per year, and hospital admissions by 8,254.

Where do we stand as a church on these issues? We have a long tradition of standing against the abuse of alcohol. This is not a narrow moral viewpoint, a snobbish rejection of other people's pleasures. What we actually have is on one hand, a deep concern for the well-being and flourishing of every human being, as God's creation; and a deep desire for every person on earth to enjoy the freedom in Christ we have come to know. We cannot enjoy this freedom as long as we are enslaved to alcohol, or other substances of abuse. We speak about freedom from a place of freedom, and we speak against anyone who wants to hold others captive for the sake of profit.

Your friend in Christ, *Grant*

Top 12 Facts about Fairtrade Bananas

by Heather Nicholson

In the UK we eat 5 billion bananas every year. How much do you know about this delicious and versatile fruit?

1. A third of bananas sold in the UK are Fairtrade

That comes to around 240,000 metric tonnes. All bananas sold at Waitrose, Co-op and Sainsbury's are Fairtrade. Other shops sell Fairtrade bananas too so make sure to look out for the FAIRTRADE Mark.

2. Fairtrade Premiums totalled £25.5 million in 2016

Banana farmers and workers received £25.5 million in Fairtrade Premiums in 2016, an increase of 5% from the previous year. Fairtrade Premium is an additional sum of money which goes into a communal fund for workers and farmers to use to improve their social, economic and environmental conditions.

3. Use banana skins to calm itchy mosquito bites

Next time you peel a banana, pause before you chuck out the skin. Do you have any bites? Banana peel contains an anti-inflammatory agent.

4. Bananas are the backbone of many countries' economies

Trading bananas is the cornerstone of many developing countries' economies, with an estimated global export value of \$7 billion. They are also the staple food for millions of people.

5. Is a banana a fruit, herb or tree?

It's a herb and a fruit! Distantly related to ginger, bananas are classed as an herbaceous plant rather than a tree because what appears to be a trunk isn't actually a trunk. Instead the leaves are tightly wrapped around a single stem, which leads up to a fruit-bearing flower stalk.

6. Bananas have tons of health benefits

Bananas are loaded with potassium, which helps regulate heart function and blood pressure. Potassium-rich foods help to lower blood pressure and protect against heart disease and strokes. Nutritional and tasty!

7. How many calories are there in a banana?

It's a popular question so here's your answer – approximately 105 calories. Banana cake, however, may contain a few more...

8. Where do bananas come from?

Originally, bananas came from Asia but today they come from all over the world. Most of the bananas sold in the UK come from Latin America, whereas India produces the most bananas overall. Farmers and workers in Latin America and the Caribbean produce 94% of all Fairtrade bananas consumed worldwide. There are currently 22,000 banana farmers and plantation workers in the Fairtrade system working in 91 certified co-operatives and 56 certified plantations.

9. You can use banana skins to shine your shoes

The potassium found in bananas is a key ingredient in shoe polish. Simply peel your banana and use the inner lining of the skin to rub all over your shoes. Buff up afterwards with a soft cloth.

10. 47% of bananas grown worldwide are Cavendish

There are many different types of banana but almost all bananas exported to the western world are Cavendish bananas. The popularity of different types of banana has been driven by disease. When the Gros Michel banana, the exporter's pick in the 1950s, was practically wiped out by the fungus known as Panama disease, farmers turned to the Cavendish banana which was less tasty but immune. These bananas are sterile and depend on propagation via cloning. However, the Cavendish banana is no longer immune...

11. Panama disease is a major threat to the banana trade

17 million tonnes of bananas are exported globally each year, almost all of which are Cavendish bananas. The current strain of the Panama disease attacks Cavendish bananas and some 10,000 hectares of Cavendish have already been destroyed. Experts warn that the fungus could spread to Latin America, where many of the bananas we buy come from. Scientists are attempting to create a robust variety that could replace the current crop.

12. Fairtrade has improved the lives of banana farmers

In 2016, Fairtrade banana farmers and workers earned €28,503,060 in Fairtrade Premiums. 96% of banana smallholders surveyed in Colombia said that their economic situation had improved since joining Fairtrade. These farmers reported an average 34% increase in income because of Fairtrade.

Dates for articles for the February /March 2019 “Contact.”

If you have any articles for the next edition of Contact, please give or send them to Sandra Nossiter, Contact Editor, or Dorothy Barker, by Sunday 13th January 2019.

Thank you!

Summary of the Church Meeting held on 21st October 2018.

28 members attended .

The Treasurer presented the Finance Report and a copy is available on request. The finances are in a satisfactory position at this point in the year, but not as strong as the last two years. The meeting thanked John for his ongoing work in looking after church finances.

Property: estimates have been obtained for improvements to the premises. An accessible toilet would cost around £13,000 plus VAT; a servery would cost £5000 plus VAT and automatic doors off the lobby a further £6000 plus VAT. Without a grant the entirety of the works are probably not attainable in one go next year. Church Meeting felt that the accessible toilet was the first priority.

Meetings: Church Meeting decided that the “winter” meetings in October and January would be on a Sunday at 11.15 am but the “summer” meetings in April and July would be during the week. To be reviewed next October.

Christmas arrangements:

Dec 15th- from 10 till 12. Sorting Socks and Chocs at **St Francis church**.

Dec 16th- 10 am- Junior and Youth Church involved in worship.

Dec 16th at 4pm- Carols and Mince Pies. An informal service.

Dec 24th – 6pm- Christmas Eve Family worship

Dec 25th – 10.45 am – Christmas Day Family worship

Dec 30th – United Service at 10.45 am **AT ST CUTHBERT’S**.

The Way Forward.

There are huge changes coming to churches in this Synod, and it is an opportunity for the energy and gifts of lay people to be recognised and used. *See the notes circulating about this on a separate sheet.*

Elections: Audrey Matfin and Dorothy Coates were re-elected to the Pastoral Eldership, and Mary Foster was elected as Pastoral Elder.

Dorothy Barker was re-elected as Development Elder. No further nominations.

Harry Fawcitt (Property) and Stewart Barclay (Finance) were re-elected to the respective committees. No further nominations.

Church Meeting thanked those people who have decided to retire as Elders- Julia Watson (Pastoral Elder) and Peter Willox,(Development Elder) for their contributions to the life and work of St George’s.

Outreach: following comments from the recent LMMR report, church members produced a long list of activities which are already happening- such as Toddlers and Saturday Zone.

AOB : Our Junior and Youth church would like to be involved in Welcoming, Reading, Taking the Offering.

Solomon thanked the church for its continuing prayer and financial support for Seeds of Hope.

A Year of Time

Try to imagine a life without timekeeping. You probably can't. You know the month, the year, the day of the week. There is a clock on your wall or on the dashboard of the car. You have a schedule, a calendar, a time for dinner, or a movie.

Yet all around you, time keeping is ignored. Birds are not late. A dog does not check its watch. Deer do not fret over passing birthdays. Man alone measures time. Man alone chimes the hours. And because of this, man alone suffers a paralyzing fear that no other creature endures. A fear of time running out. *"The Time Keeper", Mitch Albom.*

Even thinking about the subject of time may prove discomfoting, it is not a bad idea- especially at the beginning of a year. As we look into 2019 we look at a block of time. We see 12 months; 52 weeks; 365 days; 8,760 hours; 525,600 minutes; 31,536,000 seconds.

And all is a gift from God. We have done nothing to deserve it, earn it, or purchase it. Like the air we breathe, time comes to us as a part of life.

The gift of time is not ours alone. It is given equally to each person. Rich and poor, educated and ignorant, strong and weak, - every man, woman and child has the same twenty four hours every day.

Another important thing about time is that you cannot stop it. there is no way to slow it down, turn it off, or adjust it. Time marches on.

And you cannot bring back time. Once it is gone, it is gone. Yesterday is lost forever. If yesterday is lost, tomorrow is uncertain. We may look ahead at a full year's block of time, but we really have no guarantee that we will experience any of it.

Obviously, time is one of our most precious possessions. We can waste it. We can worry over it. We can spend it on ourselves. Or, as good stewards, we can invest it in the kingdom of God. The new year is full of time. As the seconds tick away, will you be tossing time out of the window, or will you make every minute count? *Steven B Cloud.*

A Prayer for the New Year

May God make our year a happy one! Not by shielding us from all sorrows and pain, but by strengthening us to bear it, as it comes:

Not by making our path easy , but by making us sturdy to travel any path.

Not by taking hardships from us, but by taking fear from our heart.

Not by granting us unbroken sunshine, but by keeping our face bright, even in the shadows.

Not by making our life always pleasant, but by showing us when people and their causes need you most, and by making us anxious to be there to help.

May God's love, peace, hope and joy fill our hearts and our lives.

Father I place into your hands the things that I can't do.

Father I place into your hands the times that I've been through.

Father I place into your hands the way that I should go,

For I know I always can trust you.

Father I place into your hands my friends and family.

Father I place into your hands the things that trouble me.

Father I place into your hands the person I would be,

For I know I always can trust you.

Nicaragua News October 2018

Hello dear family and friends!

I hope to make this newsletter a bit brighter than all the others you have received this year. But first of all let me give you an update on the political situation here. Thankfully there are not many shootings now, but many people are still not accounted for. The president is still adamant that he will not step down from office until the end of his term in 2021. In the meantime, the country is just sinking lower and lower and thousands seeking asylum elsewhere. It is felt that if they have to wait for elections in 2021, there will not be a country left to vote. Economically it is virtually on its knees now and unemployment has many people in a destitute state.

The good news is I now have my passport!! But still no visa.

After more than five months, it has been decided that I have to travel to the capital, Managua, to sort my visa out, which meant my passport had to be sent on the plane from Managua to Bluefields, in order for me to fly to Managua for the visa. I am waiting to hear when that has to happen. There is very little time as I'll be heading home in less than five weeks. But it was a lovely feel to have some identification and to know I can now leave the country if needs must at anytime.

The weather has been atrocious lately with torrential rains causing much flooding. Thousands of school children and adults turned out for the march for Independence Day on the 14th September and got soaked. Then on 30th September hundreds took part in the march for Bible Sunday and again, we were drenched. Rain doesn't stop play here in Nicaragua!

Many of our SIFT children wore 'Student of Excellence' sashes on the march and some of them had the honour of carrying their own school flag because of their academic achievements. These are proud moments for me when I am able to take their photograph to send to their sponsor.

When I went to deliver a card to one of our students for her 12th birthday recently, she was not in the best condition. She was surrounded by her friends and was covered in eggs and flour. This is quite a tradition here that around that age, friends will put their money together to buy a few eggs and a small bag of flour and cover the birthday celebrant. It's called having a 'fun' birthday!

Each year our women's group put on a special lunch for the 70 municipal workers in Bluefields and this year was no exception. It was a privilege for us to provide a lunch, a free raffle and a blouse/shirt and a cap for each of them, which had been donated by a group in America. It is our way of saying thank you to these people who clean the streets, empty the bins and work at the recycling centre.

As many of you know, my job up to my retirement was working with elderly, lonely, isolated people. In the nine years that I have been coming to Bluefields, I have wanted to do something to recognise the elderly, but I knew my purpose for coming to Nicaragua, was administering school scholarships. Even though I get involved with other projects I'm able to

fund, my priority is my SIFT work. However, a small building has come available and last week I started a lunch club. The room is small but it can seat 24 people around 4 tables. The week before I made some small invitations and went round the town visiting some of the elderly and finding men who roam the streets most of the day, not knowing where their next meal is coming from, sometimes it is out of the litter bins and invited them to come along. I had no idea how the response would be - but it was brilliant. My problem is going to be turning people away, as even on Saturday, some turned up asking if they could have a lunch too how could I turn them away?? Well, fortunately the food seemed to be never ending - chicken, vegetables, rice and salad was devoured in no time to all who turned up. I know as word gets round, it will be more difficult to feed them all. It will only be one day a week until I return in March, then maybe we can take on another day. I have 4 excellent volunteers who I know will keep it running while I'm home on vacation. I have sufficient funding to leave the necessary money behind and I have some regular donors that I'm confident I will be able to sustain this. I was reminded of the following verse:

"When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind and you will be blessed." Luke 14 v 13

All for now. I hope this finds you in good spirits and the best of health, ready for the colder weather which must surely be on its way!

Love Margaret

Synod Prayers for December

We are asked to pray for the following people and places in Northern Synod.

- 2nd Advent, as we prepare for Christmas.
PCM (Presbyterian Church of Mozambique) and the work of the Mozambique Council of Churches.
- 9th The work of Ministries and Development Committee and its convenor, Rev'd Hilary Collinson; St Columba's URC, North Shields; St Andrew's URC, Monkseaton; Rev'd Dr Matthew Prevett; Human Rights Day (10th).
- 16th Stamfordham LEP (Methodist/URC); Rev'd Harold Stutely (Methodist); Bellingham LEP (Methodist/URC); Falstone & Kielder URC; Wark LEP (Methodist/URC); Deacon Anne Taylor (Methodist).
- 23rd St John the Evangelist LEP (Anglican/Baptist/Methodist/URC), Kingston Park; Christmas worship across the Synod.
- 30th PCM, their retired ministers and those newly appointed to posts with the Presbyterian Church in Mozambique. Northern Divisional Salvation Army Commanders, Majors Denis and Olive Lomax.

Obituary printed in the London Times - Very Good and true!!

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years.

No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

- Knowing when to come in out of the rain;
- Why the early bird gets the worm;
- Life isn't always fair;
- And maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realise that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death,

- by his parents, Truth and Trust,
- by his wife, Discretion,
- by his daughter, Responsibility and of course his son, Reason.

He is survived by his 5 stepbrothers;

- I Know My Rights
- I Want It Now
- Someone Else Is To Blame
- I'm A Victim
- Pay me for Doing Nothing

Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone. 'SAD'

Points to Ponder

- If you don't take a Sabbath, something is wrong. You're doing too much, you're being too much in charge. You've got to quit, one day a week, and just watch what God is doing when you're not doing anything . *Eugene H Peterson*
- The church must be reminded that it's not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority. *Martin Luther King Jnr.*
- In the twilight of life, God will not judge us on our earthly possession and human success, but rather on how much we have loved. *Clergy Coaching Network*
- We must talk about Poverty, because people insulated by their own comfort lose sight of it.
- If your church loves a past era more than the current mission, it loves the wrong thing. *Ed Stetzer.*
- Too many churches die of small thinking. Small thinking says: We don't have enough; it can't happen here; who will pay for it and we've never done it that way before. Those who serve an infinite God should never have their imaginations deadened by small thinking. *Carey Nieuwhof.*
- Sometimes memories sneak out of my eyes and roll down my cheeks.
- Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. *C.S Lewis*
- Do not ask your children to strive for extraordinary lives. Such striving may seem admirable, but it is the way of foolishness. Help them instead to find the wonder and the marvel of an ordinary life. Show them the joys of tasting tomatoes, apples and pears. Show them how to cry when pets and people die. Show them the infinite pleasure in the touch of the hand. And make the ordinary come alive for them. The extraordinary will take care of itself. *William Martin, Kissing Fish*
- A lie does not become truth; wrong doesn't become right and evil doesn't become good, just because it is accepted by a majority.
- When it rains, look for the rainbows. When it is dark, look for the stars.
- It is never too late for a new beginning in your life.

All the above quotes are feely available on the Internet

Is the Coffee Industry Guilty of Exploitation?

by Peter d'Angremond of Max Havelaar Foundation

The price for Arabica coffee beans has plummeted in recent weeks to below production costs, jeopardising the livelihoods of 25 million coffee farming families worldwide. Peter d'Angremond of Max Havelaar Foundation discusses the impact of the price crash and what we must do now to protect coffee farmers.

Coffee farmers rang the alarm bell due to the price of coffee beans dropping to a dramatic low. This threatens the already fragile existence of 25 million farming families worldwide. We can no longer turn a blind eye to what is happening.

Brazil and Colombia, who together produce half of the world's coffee, published a joint statement affirming the fact that farmers are forced to sell their coffee far below cost price.

The disastrous situation in the coffee sector is confirmed by recent figures. At the end of 2016, the price of Arabica coffee on the New York Stock Exchange was \$1.55 per pound (454 grams). Since then the price has dropped further to a dramatic low point this week of less than one dollar per pound. Due to the extreme decline of 30% in price, farmers could be facing an annual loss of more than 11 billion dollars of income. No development programme can bridge this gap.

Sustainability is on everyone's lips these days and often we think we are doing a good job. The coffee-producing countries state that while many large multinational companies do promote and act on sustainability, these activities are completely negated by their commercial practices. The recently released report 'Coffee Barometer' comes to the same conclusion. Of the total value of coffee (around 200 billion dollars in 2015), only 10% stays in the countries of origin. In total, large companies spend approximately 350 million dollars a year on sustainability. Set against the income loss of 11 billion dollars, this is a drop in the ocean.

FOR 3 QUARTERS OF ALL PACKS OF COFFEE IN THE UK SUPERMARKET, NO PRICE SECURITY IS OFFERED FOR COFFEE FARMERS.

By paying prices that are too low, the coffee industry is at least partly responsible for human rights issues such as poverty, child labour, poor working conditions as well as environmental damage. In sustainability discussions, talking about a 'decent price' is taboo. Industry largely refuses to commit to decent prices for farmers.

In the UK, Fairtrade, which is the only certification mark that requires a minimum price of coffee buyers (\$1.40 per pound), has a market share of around 25%. This means that for 3 quarters of all packs of coffee in the UK supermarket, no price security is offered for coffee farmers. They are then dependent on the vagaries of the market.

It is time that coffee brands, supermarkets and the industry take structural responsibility by adjusting their purchasing policy.

And do we, as consumers, want to be involved in the exploitation of coffee farmers by buying their products?

From the online blog of the Fairtrade Foundation (Sept 18)

Traidcraft faces end of 40 years' trading

Ethical consumption is challenged in difficult economic climate

Traidcraft plc, the Fairtrade pioneers whose church-based retailers have transformed shopping in the UK, subject to consultation, could cease trading by the end of 2018 unless a solution can be found in the coming month.

The plc, which generates £10m in annual sales was founded by six people in Newcastle in 1979. It's now in formal consultation with staff and other stakeholders following recent poor trading figures. The business has experienced shocks caused by the decision to leave the EU, and along with other retailers, sales have been hit by economic uncertainty and stagnating wages.

Chief Executive Robin Roth said:

“We are the sort of business that pays up front – that’s in our nature as an ethical business. So when the pound fell after the Brexit referendum, we took a hit. We also stand by our published prices, so unlike other retailers we stood by our customers, absorbed a lot of the additional cost, and kept price rises to a minimum.”

These factors, together with a disappointing online relaunch, contributed to the decision by the Traidcraft board to propose to cease trading at the end of the year unless a solution can be found. Traidcraft plc’s charity arm, Traidcraft Exchange, is a separate organisation and will continue its work with producers and in campaigning and lobbying for trade jus-tice in the UK regardless of what happens to Traidcraft plc.

All the plc’s 68 staff, based at Traidcraft HQ in Gateshead, are facing redundancy.

Traidcraft’s 4,300 Fair Traders, 85% of whom are motivated by faith, account for about half of Traidcraft’s revenue. Their sales of tea, coffee, cards and crafts at church fetes and school fairs have even changed the buying decisions of major supermarkets.

“Our wonderful, committed Fair Traders make a daily difference in the life of fledgling enterprises in hard-to-reach parts of the world”, says Robin. “Because of their love for the cause, Fairtrade got on the High Street, and a new generation is growing to understand justice as an everyday matter.”

Fair Traders, customers, and supporters have been encouraged to continue supporting Traidcraft plc as a good autumn season is a pre-requisite if the company is to have a future model.

Alliances between Fair Traders and Traidcraft’s charity arm will continue, by means of fundraising events, donations and campaigning for change, even if trading ceases.

The Chief Executive wants people to get in touch with ideas for a future for Traidcraft plc: lovetraidcraft@traidcraft.co.uk

All media enquiries to W North:

Christian Cerisola 0191 375 9100 or 07824 553170 christian@wcommunications.co.uk

Becky Beaumont 0191 375 9100 or 07875 649303

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Smile!

- What starts with “w” and ends with “hat”
- Where are mathematicians buried? The Symmertery.
- I’ve asked my girlfriend to polish my medieval battle uniform whilst I go to the pub. She always said she wanted a night in, shining armour.
- Just found out my uncle has left me a stately home in his will. I have no idea where Sod Hall is, but I’m just off to Google it now !
- I’ve applied for a job with Citroen. I don’t know why, but they wanted two CV’s.
- My wife refuses to go to Karaoke with me. I have to duet alone.
- My uncle works for a company that makes bicycle wheels. He’s the Spokesperson.
- One of the Russian acrobats in our human pyramid has been deported. We don’t have Oleg to stand on.
- My dad is 83 and still doesn’t need glasses! He just drinks straight from the bottle.
- I’ve accidentally swallowed some Scrabble tiles....my next trip to the toilet could spell disaster.
- The police stopped my car. “Do the letters H.S mean anything to you?” they asked. No”. “What about W.D. then?” . “No, means nothing to me”. “How about F.J ?” “Am I suspected of something? What’s this about?” “Just initial enquiries, sir”
- Apparently if you buy any Adam Ant sheet music from Amazon, they’ll throw in a stand and deliver.

With thanks to LIVErNEWS, the Liver Patient support Newsletter.

Dates for your Diaries 2019

Church Meetings: Sunday January 20th at 11.15 am
Thursday April 11th at 7 pm
Thursday July 25th at 7pm.
Sunday October 20th at 11.15 am

Development Elders meetings. (all at 7pm)

January 17th, March 21st, May 16th, July 18th (with Property); October 17th; November 21st (with Finance)

Pastoral Elders will meet during the year. (dates and times to be decided).

Additional Development Elders’ meetings may be arranged during the year.

Coffee Rota for Sundays

December

	Set up	Serve
2 nd	Ann & Renee	Ann & Renee
9 th	Clare	Sandra & Clare
16 th	Kim & Meetra	Carole & Ivy
23 rd	Tony & Babs	Tony & Babs
30 th	(United service at St Cuthbert's)	

January

6 th	Clare & Renee	Clare & Renee
13 th	Kim & Meetra	Carole & Ivy
20 th	Tony & Babs	Tony & Babs
27 th	Solomon & Youth Church	Solomon & Youth Church

February

3 rd	Clare	Youth Church, Sandra & Clare
10 th	Kim & Meetra	Carole & Ivy

Lectionary Readings

YEAR C	
02-Dec-18	Jeremiah 33 vs 14-16, Psalm 25 vs 1-10, 1Thessalonians 3 vs 9-13, Luke 21 vs 25-36
09-Dec-18	Malachi 3 vs 1-4, Psalm 27 (or Luke 1 vs 68-79), Philippians 1 vs 3-11, Luke 3 vs 1-6
16-Dec-18	Zephaniah 3 vs 14-20, Psalm 45, (or Isaiah 12 vs 2-6) Philippians 4 vs 4-7, Luke 3 vs 7-18
23-Dec-18	Micah 5 vs 2-5a, Psalm 80 vs 1-7, (or Luke 1 vs 47-55) Hebrews 10 vs 5-10 Luke 1 vs 39-45 (46-55)
24/12/2018 not lectionary	Genesis 1 vs 1-10, or Psalm 19 vs 1-4, 1John 1 vs 5-7, Genesis 1 vs 11-13, St. John 1 vs 1-5
25-Dec-18	Isaiah 52 vs 7-10, Psalm 98, Hebrews 1 vs 1-4 (5-12) St John 1 vs 1-14
30-Dec-18	1 Samuel 2 vs 18-20, 26, Psalm 148, Colossians 3 vs 12-17 and Luke 2 vs 41-52
06-Jan-19	Isaiah 60 vs 1-6, Psalm 72 vs 1-7, 10-14, Ephesians 3 vs 1-12, Matthew 2 vs 1-12
13-Jan-19	Isaiah 43 vs 1-7, Psalm 29, Acts 8 vs 14-17, Luke 3 vs 15-17, 21-22
20-Jan-19	Isaiah 62 vs 1-5, Psalm 36 vs 5-10, 1Corinthians 12 vs 1-11, St John 2 vs 1-11
27-Jan-19	Nehemiah 8 vs 1-3, 5-6, 8-10, Psalm 19, 1Corinthians 12 vs 12-31a, Luke 4 vs 14-21
03-Feb-19	Jeremiah 1 vs 4-10, Psalm 71 vs 1-6, 1Corinthians 13 vs 1-13, Luke 4 vs 21-30
10-Feb-19	Isaiah 6 vs 1-8, (9-13), Psalm 138, 1Corinthians 15 vs 1-11, Luke 5 vs 1-11

1st Corinthians 13 (a Christmas version)

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtimes, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, sing carols in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir, but do not focus on those I love the most, I have missed the point.

In other words....

Love stops the cooking to hug a child.

Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the spouse.

Love is kind, though harried and tired.

Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at all the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful that they are there to be in the way.

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust.

But the gift of love will endure.

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.

Diary

December

- 1st 2.30 pm Saturday Zone
- 2nd **10.30 am** **Altogether Worship** – advent readings and songs. To include Holy Communion. Led by the Elders
- 3rd 10.00 am Decorating the church. Volunteers welcome.
- 8th 11-12 noon **Christmas Presence.** Litter picking near St Silas's. (Heaton Churches)
- 12- 1pm Carol singing (Heaton Churches). Venue to be confirmed.
- 9th 10.00 am Praise worship led by Harry Fawcitt
- 11.00 am Traditional worship led by Jackie Haws.
- 15th 10- 12 noon **Christmas Presence.** Socks and Chocs sorting at St Francis'.
- 12 – 2pm Carol Singing on Chillingham Road, and Martha and Mary's.
- 3.00 pm Christmas Meal for all the church. Entertainment from Youth Church.
- 16th 10.00 am Family worship. Led by Rev'd John Paul
- 11.00 am Traditional worship led by Rev'd John Paul
- 4.00 pm Carols and Readings, followed by mince pies. Café church-style.
- 17th 11.30 am Pram Service for Pre-school and Little Fishes Toddlers group.
- 22nd 2.30 pm Saturday Zone Christmas Special
- 4.15 pm Carols and Film.
- 23rd 10 am Praise worship led by Judith Das.
- 11 am Traditional worship led by the Moderator of Northern Synod, Rev'd Dave Herbert.
- 24th 6 pm Christmas Eve: informal service for all ages.
- 25th 10.45 am Christmas Day worship and short reflection.
- 30th 10.45 am United Service at St Cuthbert's, Heaton Road.

January 2019

- 6th 10.00 am Praise worship led by the minister.
- 11.00 am Traditional worship led by the minister. To include Holy Communion.
- 13th 10.00 am Praise worship led by John Smee and Jim Grieve.
- 11.00 am Traditional worship led by Rev Dr Tony Haws, retired URC minister.
- LAST DAY FOR ARTICLES FOR THE FEB/MAR "CONTACT"**
- 17th 7.00 pm Development Elders meeting.
- 20th 10.00 am Altogether Worship led by the minister.
- 11.15 am CHURCH MEETING**
- 6.00 pm Service at Heaton Baptist Church. (Week of Prayer for Christian Unity)
- 27th 10.00 am Praise worship led by Sharon Cowey
- 11.00 am Traditional worship led by Jackie Haws, URC Accredited Lay Preacher.

February 2019

- 3rd 10.00 am Praise worship led by the minister. To include Holy Communion.
- 11.00 am Traditional worship led by the minister.
- 10th 10.00 am Praise worship led by Harry Fawcitt
- 11.00 am Traditional worship led by Mrs Margaret Storey, Methodist Local Preacher.

Rotas December 2018					
	2nd	9th	16th	23rd	30th
Duty Elder	Miss Hall	Mrs Nossiter	Mr Solomon	Miss Coates	
Door Stewards	Mr & Mrs Renton	Mrs Das & Mrs Cadwallader	Mrs Matfin & Mr Armstrong	Mr & Miss Hall	(United Service at St Cuthbert's)
Communion Stewards	Miss Coates & Mr Hall				
Flower Arrangers	Mrs Renton	Mrs Nossiter	Mrs Wilkes	Mrs Hutton	—
Flower Donations	Mrs M Cairns	Mrs Cadwallader	<i>No donor</i>	Mrs Croft	
Flower Delivery	Mrs Willford	Mrs Dixon	Mrs Croft	<i>Flowers stay in church</i>	<i>Flowers stay in church</i>
Offering Count	Mr & Mrs Nossiter	Mr & Mrs Fawcitt	Mr & Mrs Renton	Mr & Mrs S Cowey	
Screens Set up	Mr Barclay	Mrs Dixon	Mr Renton	Mr Barclay	—
Screens operate	Mr Barclay	Mrs Dixon	Mr Fawcitt	Mr Armstrong	—
Rotas January 2019					February
	6th	13th	20th	27th	3rd
Duty Elder	Mrs Dixon	Mrs Barker	Mrs S Cowey	Mrs Das	Mr Hall
Door Stewards	Mr & Mrs Fawcitt	Mr & Mrs S Cowey	Youth Church	Miss Coates & Miss Clough	Mr & Mrs Renton
Communion Stewards	Mr & Mrs Hall				Mrs Das & Mrs Croft
Flower Arrangers	Mrs Hutton	Mrs Barker	Mrs Renton	Mrs Nossiter	Mrs Wilkes
Flower Donations	<i>No donor</i>	<i>No donor</i>	<i>No donor</i>	<i>No donor</i>	<i>No donor</i>
Flower Delivery	Mrs Dixon	Mrs Croft	Miss Clough	Mrs Matfin	Mrs Fawcitt
Offering Count	Mr & Mrs Nossiter	Mr & Mrs Fawcitt	Mr & Mrs Renton	Mr & Mrs S Cowey	Mrs Matfin
Screens Set up	Mr Barclay	Mr Renton	Mr Barclay	Mr Renton	
Screens operate	Mr Barclay	Mr Fawcitt	Mr Armstrong	Mr Renton	