



# Northgate News

February – March 2024



## Letter from the Church Secretary

Christmas has been and gone. What a joy the Christmas season was for Northgate. We went carol singing at Rydal Care Home, which was much appreciated by the residents and staff; a Chris Kindle event in the church was enjoyed by those that went; and a joyful children's Christmas party at which Santa made an appearance.



Our Services through Advent were uplifting and varied; our Candlelight carol service on Christmas Eve was attended by over 80 people, many of whom took the opportunity to have a look at our newly refurbished downstairs; Christmas morning service was a delight. Throughout the season we enjoyed seeing the Church decorated with Christmas Trees, floral displays, and nativity scenes. These things do not 'just happen' and our thanks must go to all who set up decorations, prepared and delivered services, planned and hosted events; helped with refreshments; read, played instruments, took part; cleared up afterwards; came along and enjoyed; prayed quietly at home; a truly team effort showing what can be achieved when we all pull together. Thank you everyone.(only 330 days til next Christmas when we can do it all again).



New Year is a time to look back, to see what we have achieved (we achieved a lot) and what we can learn from our experiences ( and lessons were learnt), but more importantly it is a time to look forward.

We need to keep our focus on Jesus who will guide us and lead us in the path we should take. As we consider how to move forward, how to optimise the facilities we now have, how to use this gift of our beautiful building to spread God's word, we must never lose sight of Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith. (Hebrews 12 v 1-2).

We had a vision to be a church that preached God's word, shared God's word and lived God's word. Having put our trust and faith in God to bring us this far – and He has guided, led and provided over the past year – we must put our trust and faith in Him to guide us and lead us in the next steps. A prayer afternoon is being held in February (details later in this magazine),our Church Meeting in March is a great opportunity to be part of the decision making (again details later in the magazine), we are at an exciting moment in our church life, worship and witness. I pray that as we move forward we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and in doing so open them to see His plan for our fellowship.

Dot

## From the Editors

So here it is, the first issue of 2024!

We hope everyone had a lovely Christmas and are settling into 2024

The deadline for the next issue will be **MONDAY 25TH MARCH**

Feel free to email us at:  
vickimilligan@live.co.uk

## Preachers for February/March

4<sup>th</sup> February - John Elliston (Communion)

11<sup>th</sup> February – Meg Thomson

18<sup>th</sup> February – Dot Thomson

25<sup>th</sup> February – Rev. I Ring

3<sup>rd</sup> March – Rev. John Bower (Communion)

10<sup>th</sup> March – Helen Cooper (Mothering Sunday)

17<sup>th</sup> March – Derek Jackson

24<sup>th</sup> March - TBC

31<sup>st</sup> March – Rev. John Elliston (Communion)

First service in April - 7<sup>th</sup> April – Meg Thomson



## Obituary - Irene Carter



Irene Carter grew up in Darlington and started her schooling at North Road Primary.

Irene did well at school and went on to Teacher Training College in Bingley

Whilst still a fairly young teacher she took part in an Educational Exchange spending 2 years teaching in Canada. Sadly her time in Canada was cut short as she returned home when her Father became unwell. She continued to live at home.

A dedicated teacher, she also had plenty of 'out of school' activities, church being a significant part of her life outside work. Irene was an active member of Union Street Congregational Church where she was a deacon, sang in the choir, a trustee of the Union Street Trust ( a charitable fund set up by a member of the congregation many years before) and Akela of the cub pack. When Union Street and St George's joined to form Northgate United Reformed Church she continued many of these roles. Singing in the choir, she became an Elder, she was Church Secretary for many years, and also Registrar for Weddings at the Church. Many will remember her sitting in the choir seats at front of church – always immaculately dressed. Which brings us neatly to another of Irene's talents.

She was an exceptional seamstress, making many of her own clothes. (hence always being immaculately dressed) Irene was one of these characters who needed limited sleep so spent many hours sewing, she also enjoyed knitting, (lots of soft toys for family) and embroidering (there is a beautiful panel on our church quilt that Irene created)

She used these skills to create wonderful costumes for our Church Nativity, making robes and splendid hats for the wisemen –we still use them to this day.

Christmas reminds me of another role Irene had. Our church choir always led the service of 9 lessons and carols, it always began with Once in Royal David's City, for many years Irene opened this service by singing the first verse of this carol solo – her beautiful voice heralding in the Christmas Spirit;

Irene was a good singer –She loved singing, and her voice could clearly be heard leading the choir in Church. She didn't restrict her singing to Church either, she sang with the Carol Andrews Singers a local choir with an excellent reputation.

Irene enjoyed travelling. Once she had retired she was able to travel more and spent many holidays over in Kenya at Kadjiado Child Care Centre with Georgie Orme a missionary linked to our Church. She always returned with stories of the Massai children and the work of Georgie.

She was a volunteer at Ormesby Hall Middlesbrough where she happily dressed up in period costume and took charge of the kitchen, or wherever she was put. I have to say I can imagine her being a Housekeeper for a big house, in charge of the maids and kitchen staff and I am sure she would have kept them all in order.

Irene never married but lived a full and varied life. She was a talented lady with a sense of adventure. She will be missed but her mark and memory will remain in the wisemen hats she made, the embroidered panel in the church banner, the memories we have of her, and of course the singing of Once in Royal David's City.

## Tea & Tots

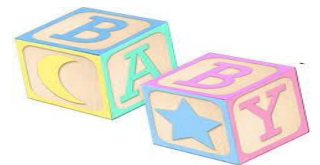
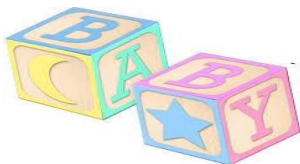
*Baby and toddler sessions held in the sanctuary on selected Wednesday afternoons*

*Next sessions are:*

*Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February*

*Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February*

*Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March*



*For more info speak to Shona Randle or Mel Barker*

## Prayer Afternoon

On the 7th March we will be having a church meeting to discuss the future of the church.

We are all going to need to pull together, and we will get nowhere unless we put God first and ask for his guidance.

So on the afternoon of Saturday the 24th February between 2 and 5, the church will be open for prayer for God's guidance as to the direction he wants us to go.

If you feel you would like help in focusing your prayers we will be providing a prayer walk round the premises or you could just sit quietly in private prayer.

Tea and biscuits will be provided and if there is anyone who could help with that or the stewarding please could you contact me on 484093.

I urge you to attend the Church meeting and come and spend some time in prayer on the 24th February between 2 to 5.

Harry Bunting



## Brain Teaser Answer

If December 31<sup>st</sup> is the end of the year..  
Then what is the end of Christmas?

Answer:  
S



## A Little Laugh...

What kind of sweets does an astronaut like?

Mars Bar!



Northgate  
URC  
Darlington

# BURNS SUPPER

A black and white portrait of Robert Burns, the Scottish poet, wearing a dark coat and a white cravat. He is positioned in front of a Saltire flag, which is a white saltire on a blue field.

**Saturday 3 February 2024**  
**7.30pm in the Church Hall**

Tickets £10

Traditional Fare (including gluten free haggis)

Bring your own alcohol

Soft drinks, tea and coffee available

## **Church Meeting**

Our next Church meeting is to be held on Wednesday 6th March 7.30pm in the hall downstairs.

We will be serving refreshments from 7.15pm

This is a great opportunity to experience the new facilities first hand and to have your say about how we move forward with using the facilities.

We hope that as many of you as are able come along and share in our plans for the future.



## **Celebration Weekend - Saturday 6th April and Sunday 7th April.**

We are planning a special weekend to celebrate the completion of our refurbishment.

More details will follow but we hope to have the church open on the Saturday with a variety of events happening throughout the day. Saturday evening we are planning to have a meal downstairs in the hall and on Sunday morning a service of thanksgiving and celebration.



Please invite friends old and new to join in the fun.



Marital Arts



For information on sessions see Andrew Randle



## Coffee Rota

The church coffee rota is looking rather sad at the moment. If you are able to help out and do coffee one Sunday morning then please see Shona Randle who would be happy to add your name to the rota.

You can contact Shona at:  
s.randle64@icloud.com



## Brain Teaser

I can't be bought, but I can be stolen with a glance. I'm worthless to one, but priceless to two...

What am I?



Answer in next issue

## COMMITMENT for LIFE.

I received a letter from Suzanne Pearson Administrative Assistant, for Commitment for Life.

Thanking our congregations donation of £177 to Commitment for Life. We have been sent a certificate, which will be displayed on our church notice board:

Patrick Watt Chief Executive officer for Christian Aid sent us this short message:

Thank you so much for all your dedicated support for Commitment for Life, ongoing partnerships like Commitment for Life deepen our relationship with those across the world and challenge us to keep justice and peace at the centre of our Christian life. Together we are part of the transformation of God's kingdom and seeing change happen.

Your contributions make an enormous and practical difference to our partner communities. Your prayers Activism & generosity are a wonderful demonstration of 'life giving faith, defiant hope and generous love'.

Christian Aid and Commitment for Life ,are holding a Zoom event, CRISIS IN GAZA. On Wednesday 7th February 2pm-3pm. Register for Link commitment for life@urc.org.uk



## Coffee money – Thank You

I would like to thank all those church goers who have donated to the coffee/tea and biscuits over the last year as that has generated a great social atmosphere after church as we stay back and chat. We have also been able to keep the biscuits and the variety of drinks going while spending money of the smaller items to help equip the renovated basement. We have bought bins and toilet roll holders for the toilets, new kettles, created new noticeboards, and we are starting to make the church hall more homely. All things where we have not had to go to the treasurer for funds.

We have a list of items such as a new plumbed in water boiler like the one upstairs, microwave, toasters, a heated trolley and other items which we will purchase as the need arises as the kitchen and hall are used more frequently.

So, thank you again and be assured that the coffee money is helping to make the building more useable. We will be using the kitchen and hall on Saturday 3rd February for the Burn's night meal so this will be its first test. Please come along to that and have your say about the use of the building at the Annual General Meeting on the 6th March 2024.

Thank you again.



Photo of the most recent purchases.



This issue of In The Spotlight is Andrew Randle

### **1. How long have you been attending Northgate URC?**

*I started at Northgate in 1977 when I was introduced to the church via the youth club at Elmfield Street Hall by Allan MacInnes who lived over the road from me. I then started coming to church and became a member in April 1978.*

### **2. Favourite memory of Northgate URC?**

*I can't say I have a favourite memory, apart from I would have to say my wedding day in church in August 1988. Lasting memories are of all the Sunday extra (youth group) activities: visiting other churches, particularly Hartlepool and Stockton (Take Stock) whole weekend session mixing with other young people across Teesside URCs; the annual pantomimes in Elmfield Street Hall and latterly in Church. In the early days when there was a bigger population every event was special with the buzz of people and the Communion services were brimming with members up in the gallery too, tablecloths on every pew and glass holders for the glasses and 6 Elders serving communion. I did a stint in the choir too which added to the atmosphere. We had regular annual days out too in places such as Marske by the Sea in the summer. And, of course the church is the people, so very fond memories of Families such as the Philbys, Rowatts, Sawdens, Arthurs, Duffs, Irvines, Shepherds, Bowermans, Stewarts, MacInnes, and individuals such as Eva Stabler, Irene Carter, Joyce Thompson, and so many more, those who were always there for support and just made the family of the church, and there are those who are still around today doing their bit for the betterment of the church and congregation.*

### **3. How do you see the future of Northgate URC?**

*Many of the membership have put in so much time, effort, and dedication over the years have done a fantastic job of keeping the church going and progressing. To answer the question in short form the future is very positive we will grow and become a force for faith and community in the town.*

*It is true to say that we have declined in recent years both in the number of members and our ability to carry on some of what we used to do. However, since Covid I am inspired by the cooperation and team effort put into both renovating the church building while maintaining the people side of the church, coping with worshipping out of our church, a covid pandemic, carrying-on pastoral duties and still managing to keep contacts with older members who now cannot get to church.*

*We have focussed rightly and strongly on maintaining the traditions of the church and the membership with some attempts to develop contacts outside the church to strengthen our faith and community. Now taking the message outwards is vitally important.*

*With a renovated building we are making great strides to involve different groups from around the town, to develop the contacts with council, councillors, other churches, and public group, we are advertising in modern ways on Facebook and with a new website and a wider circulation of people receiving the Northgate news by email and printed versions. The aim being to simply get more people into the building to encourage them to see our new facilities and to use them. This will both recoup some of the money we have spent, but my main hope is that we show what a vibrant faithful group we are and that others would want to join the church and help to progress us further. There is a lot of work to do in Darlington and I believe we will be in a great position to spread the word of God and help the local community to find a sense of place. I have found over the last three years, that prayer for what we are doing have been answered and that fills me with the greatest **Hope** for the future.*

Next issue we will hear from Meg Thomson

**Christening of Vicki & Lucy Milligan's son - 14<sup>th</sup> January 2024**



**Brazilian Church - 'Ministerio Palavra Genuina'**

