

Magazine

August/September 2022

Widening our vision

The Garden grows

A book to aid reflection



Zion
United
Reformed
Church

~ Northallerton ~

Zion and Community

These are the activities that regularly take place some weekly, some monthly.

Sunday Morning worship in Church
Either 10.00 a.m. It is bright and early with a warm
or 10.30 a.m. welcome every week
tbc

Monday Tiny Time
9.30 a.m. to Looking after a small child? Come and
11.00 a.m. join us in the Church Hall for a chat and
a cuppa while the children play

Wednesday 'Way In' and 'The Other Way In'
and Saturday Make time for coffee or tea in the
10.00 a.m. to church and a chat in the Coffee room or
12 noon Secret Garden

First Wednesday Contemplative prayer
in the month Open to all. A quiet time for reflection in
2.00 p.m. the Cottage

Permission is needed to reproduce any of the items in this magazine

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Pastoral letter

Dear Friends

Members of the Church Reading Circle recently met to discuss the novel *The Glovemaker's Daughter* by Leah Fleming. It told the story of 17th century Seekers or Quakers who suffered religious persecution in England and chose to undertake the perilous journey to Philadelphia for the freedom to live and worship in accordance with their beliefs. The novel was very well researched, provided much food for thought and led to some interesting discussion.

The description of the religious persecution experienced by the Quakers was very vivid and extremely shocking. Two thoughts, in particular, struck me when reflecting on this. The first being, how easy it is for us, particularly in response to reports in the media, to condemn the apparent religious intolerance shown by people of other faiths whilst forgetting that the Christian Church does not have an unblemished record. It also made me think about the many people today who suffer religious persecution and to regret the fact that I do not remember them often enough in my prayers.



The Quakers faced hostility by some of the indigenous peoples when they settled in America, but they also received tremendous kindness from others. Again, there are many modern-day parallels on which to reflect. We may feel justifiably proud of the Refugee Support Programme in Northallerton, and we may have given generous financial aid to refugees in various parts of the world but there are other considerations. In our day-to-day life, when in the company of others who might express

prejudicial views, are we brave enough to challenge those views, or do we choose to keep quiet to prevent any awkwardness? Are we prepared to risk friendships in order to speak from our hearts of what we know to be the Christian message?

We were aware of the wonderful work of the Quaker Movement over many generations and acknowledged the Friends' commitment to integrity, equality, simplicity, community, stewardship of the Earth and peace. However, a significant talking point in the Reading Circle, even taking into account the historical period in which the novel was set, proved to be the rigid beliefs held by the early Quakers – their formal dress code, their manner of speaking, their strict rules and regulations. The main focus of the book, and of our discussion, concerned the heroine's personal spiritual journey as she wrestled with her strong desire to serve God as faithfully as she could whilst also wishing to fully embrace life.

Some group members spoke about the inflexible "Christian" attitudes and beliefs they had encountered at crucial points in their lives and how this had made them question their faith and re-assess whether they wished to continue to be involved in church life. For me, the novel emphasised how easy it is to become entrenched in dogmatic views, be judgmental towards others and become over-reliant on cherished patterns of worship and established interpretations of scripture, which often appear entirely irrelevant to those outside the church. Of course, we need to know right from wrong and to be able to respond in a Christ-like manner to life's many challenges, but this doesn't have to be unnecessarily complicated. In Matthew 22, Jesus gives us the guiding principles we need:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Whilst pondering all of the above, some verses from a much-loved hymn by F.W. Faber came to mind and offer what I believe to be the inspiration we need as we seek to live our lives in accordance with God's will.

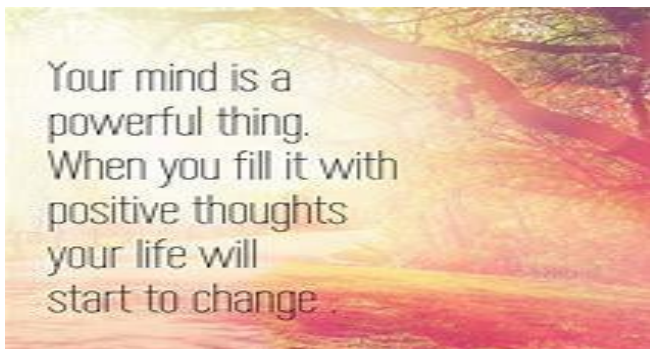
*For the love of God is broader
than the measures of our mind;
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.*

*But we make his love too narrow
by false limits of our own;
and we magnify his strictness
with a zeal he will not own.*

*If our love were but more simple
we should take him at his word;
and our lives would be illumined
by the glory of the Lord.*

Yours in Christ

Christine



Our 2nd Celebration

Sunday, 17th July saw the second of our events celebrating the 50th anniversary of the URC. The church was beautifully decorated with flowers and a lovely service was led by the Moderator, Rev David Herbert to celebrate this special occasion. The theme of 'hospitality' was very appropriate for the day, and the definition of 'creating space for the other' really opens wide that gift of hospitality which we can offer.

The service was followed by a delicious, pooled lunch in the Hall. It all looked so inviting - each table laid with a cloth and having an attractive posy of flowers and the central table full of lovely food.

A Big Thank You to Everyone who was able to attend and for all the help in doing all the jobs and providing food to make this Celebration such a success.



After such a long period when it has not been possible to hold this type of event, it was surprising how easily it all fell into place. I am sure we all got something out of the Fellowship of working, eating and, most importantly, chatting together.

For those who weren't able to join in – we're so sorry you couldn't be there. We really did miss you.

Again, thank you

Pauline Richardson

A blessing

May we know Immanuel, God's spirit dwelling with us
Causing us to dance like the wine
And to live life in its fullness.

May we know the Father's generous provision
In the food and drink on our table
And in our thanks willingly share our good fortune with others.

May we see Christ in the people we meet
And may we be Christ to them in both word and deed.

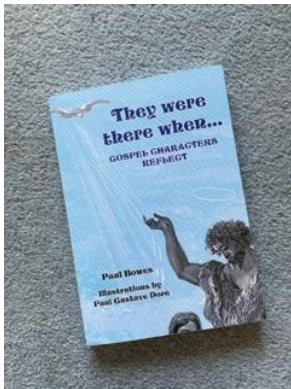
Restored by this feast,
Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Amen

Liz Styan

They were there when..

One starry night two thousand years ago, a shepherd boy came down from the hillside to see a new baby in a manger. The whole story is captured in a few New Testament sentences...in the special words we read every year. But at Christmas 2020 that suddenly didn't seem enough for me. I wanted to be that boy...to feel being there when Jesus first entered the human world in such humble surroundings. Excited, baffled, awestruck. So I wrote a short article for the Zion church magazine, trying to recapture that magic.



In doing so, I felt blessed - experiencing fresh emotions, gaining new insights. For the next few issues I submitted several more similar pieces as I adopted other personas, retelling events in a way that tried to make them alive and personal.

But then, unexpectedly, Ann and I moved house - back to the South. I lost access to the magazine outlet that had part-justified my scripts. Demotivated, I might have stopped.

But one special member of the congregation encouraged me to carry on, even if only for its own sake or for my own spiritual nurture. Until by the next Christmas I had secretly written another three dozen or so, telling most of the gospel story through the imaginary reflections of the characters who were there when...

Approaching Easter 2022, my new vicar found out about them. She was compiling a special Good Friday service and she challenged me. *'There is little detail about Simon of Cyrene in the Bible but he had a unique part to play. How did that happen?'*

Imagine how he felt.' So I did. I wrote one more...and on that Friday she invited me to read to the congregation a section from the resulting piece - which I offer to you now...

A Burden Shared (an extract) by Simon of Cyrene
Pilate was reluctantly persuaded to condemn the man to death. Whatever the rights and wrongs, that terrible victim's trudge to Golgotha inevitably ensued - no doubt after a little debilitating rough stuff from his Roman captors. The crowds en route were by now mostly baying against this Jesus...presumably any of his original supporters were just cowering in the background, if still around at all, for fear of their own arrest. So those brutal Roman soldiers goaded him along the packed, noisy streets, pushed and shoved him as he struggled under the strain of carrying the heavy wooden cross piece that would form part of his own crucifixion ordeal.

I was there to witness this increasingly cruel stage. No, much more than that. I must explain. To actually take part - against my will, of course. It was all awful, but I was mesmerised. Somehow feeling drawn towards him in an overwhelming sense of helplessness as his staggering progress got slower and slower. I didn't know him personally, yet my spirit yearned to assist. He looked so physically spent. And, as a result, I got a little too close for my own good. I guess the soldiers had begun to fear he might expire before reaching the destination, depriving the mob of their spectator sport. Seeking to alleviate the problem, one of them looked around for a different sort of victim. He grabbed me, before I could realise his intentions. Roughly shoved me to the man's side and ordered me to take over carrying the wooden beam. Suddenly, as I brushed against this Jesus, an extraordinary spark went through me. And the look of love on that fellow Jew's face I will never forget. Otherworldly, despite his pain and exhaustion. Whispered that he was going to his Father, and promising that we would meet again there. A claim to be nothing less than the son of God, in other words. Not blasphemous. A revelation. I truly believed him. Still do.

I once had the privilege of editing and publishing the books of over a hundred different authors...but never my own. So, as a personal treat for an imminent 75th birthday, I have published all these stories, embellished by nearly a hundred of the amazing nineteenth century engravings of Paul Gustave Dore.

They Were There When... (Gospel Characters Reflect) £9.99
Book Castle Publishing ISBN 978 1906632 18 2

Paul Bowes

(Paul has sent us a copy of his book which is in the foyer but if you would like your own copy, they should be available on Amazon by 27th August. Can't wait that long? Send Paul a cheque for £9.99 to 42, High Street, Barkway, Herts, SG8 8EE and it will come post haste. Ed.)

The Garden grows

A place for sharing; where people and nature can thrive

Despite the challenges of the Pandemic, the Secret Garden has continued to thrive and grow; providing a safe space to meet with friends, a quiet sanctuary to find peace and solace, and a welcoming place to laugh, learn and play.



As soon as we were allowed to meet outside, we were back gardening twice a week on Monday and Thursday afternoons. It has been lovely to welcome new volunteers and the garden continues to grow and evolve.

Some of the most damaged areas of the south wall have been carefully repaired by one volunteer – a real labour of love.

We have a new lawn for children to play on and a perennial wildflower meadow to replace the less welcoming (for humans!) “Wild area” which was full of brambles and nettles. It has been great to see the pre-school children from the “Wren’s Nest” Tuesday morning group run through the tunnel of towering flowers wafting overhead!



One volunteer loves spinning, weaving and knitting, so one raised bed is now full of plants to produce natural dyes – a steep learning curve for all!

We are slowly but surely trying to move towards more resilient, drought tolerant planting and reduce our dependence on watering. Plenty of compost, manure, ground cover and a new, larger water butt are part of the process.

It is lovely to be able to host classes from our local primary schools again. Seeing things through their eyes and hearing their comments is so encouraging:

“I was very sad when I came in, but now I feel very happy”

“It is a place where lots of things can live, and grow and have babies!” (in response to seeing lots of tadpoles, frogs and fledglings).

Without any prompts from us, the children have sensed the central aim of the garden; to share a beautiful safe space where both people and nature can flourish!



One of our hopes was to inspire others to reconnect with nature, and grow their own sustainable fresh produce. This year many of us were involved in the launch of “Incredible Edible Northallerton” with the establishment of a new community garden in the Applegarth Park in town. We donated our three espalier fruit trees

which needed to be moved and shared our time and our tools.

The church now opens the garden on market day mornings during the spring, summer and autumn to provide a warm and friendly welcome, enabling people to enjoy the restorative peace and beauty. A short reflective service was held each day during Easter week and Saturday morning prayers are often held in the garden – there is truth in the oft quoted poem “.....you can be closer to God in a garden than anywhere else on earth”! Conversations during the recent visit of Rev. Fiona Bennett, the new Moderator elect for the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, confirmed the positive impact the garden has had on the lives of many people.

Liz Styan

Lessons in life

Sit still, boy!"

When I was a boy I used to go to the barber's shop regularly with my father. Getting my hair cut then was always an itchy, uncomfortable experience, for our barber was so clumsy with his hand-clippers, sending countless trimmings down betwixt shirt and skin, and all too often causing real pain as well, when his clippers jammed and yanked on a clump of hair... Not infrequently did my father have cause to press me with "*Sit still, boy!*"...



African shopkeepers love to have unique shop notice boards, often a quote such as, for example, "The Drink Up Here!" Tea-

shop, or even sometimes a Bible verse. Share, then, the astonishment that was mine recently on hearing there is in Kampala, Uganda, even a shop called "The Exodus 14.14 Barber's" - for Exodus 14.14 reads "You have only to sit still, and the LORD will fight for you!" [Moses' command to the people of Israel terrified at the Egyptian army (like the Russians now in Ukraine) chasing after them]...

And maybe a text for us to take to heart in some fiery situations too?...

Malcolm Smith

Church diary

<u>AUGUST</u>		
Mon 1 st Aug	9.30 am	Tiny Time (Church Hall)
	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Wed 3 rd Aug	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
	2.00 pm	Contemplative Prayer Meeting (Cottage)
Thurs 4 th Aug	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)

Fri 5 th Aug	10.00 am	Elders' Meeting (Zoom)
Sat 6 th Aug	9.30 am	Prayer Meeting (Secret Garden/Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
	1.00 pm	Wedding (Church)
Sun 7th Aug	10.30 am	Morning Worship (Revd Ian Ring)
	11.45 am	Church Meeting
Mon 8 th Aug	9.30 am	Tiny Time (Church Hall)
	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Wed 9 th Aug	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
	n/a	Contemplative Prayer (Reflection sent by e-mail; contact: alexa@barberfamily.me.uk)
Thurs 11 th Aug	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Fri 12 th Aug	10.30 am	Elders' Meeting (Church)
Sat 13 th Aug	9.30 am	Prayer Meeting (Secret Garden/Coffee Room)
	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)

Sun 14th Aug	Time TBC	Morning Worship (Revd Michael Webster)
Mon 15 th Aug	9.30 am	Tiny Time (Church Hall)
	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Tues 16 th Aug	2.00 pm	Reading Circle (Secret Garden/Coffee Room)
Wed 17 th Aug	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
	n/a	Contemplative Prayer (Reflection sent by e-mail; contact: alexa@barberfamily.me.uk)
Thurs 18 th Aug	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Sat 20 th Aug	9.30 am	Prayer Meeting (Secret Garden/Coffee Room)
	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
Sun 21st Aug	Time TBC	Communion Service (Revd Alan Coustick) Commitment for Life Sunday
Mon 22 nd Aug	9.30 am	Tiny Time (Church Hall)
	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)

Tues 23 rd Aug	2.00 pm	MOU Meeting (Cottage)
Wed 24 th Aug	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
	n/a	Contemplative Prayer Meeting (Reflection sent by e-mail; contact: alexa@barberfamily.me.uk)
Thurs 25 th Aug	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Sat 27 th Aug	9.30 am	Prayer Meeting (Secret Garden/Coffee Room)
	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
Sun 28th Aug	Time TBC	Morning Worship (Revd Robert Williamson) Traidcraft Stall
Mon 29 th Aug	9.30 am	Tiny Time (Church Hall)
	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Wed 31 st Aug	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
	n/a	Contemplative Prayer (Reflection sent by e-mail; contact: alexa@barberfamily.me.uk)

SEPTEMBER

Thurs 1 st Sept	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Fri 2 nd Sept	10.00 am	Elders' Meeting (Zoom)
Sat 3 rd Sept	9.30 am	Prayer Meeting (Secret Garden/Coffee Room)
	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
Sun 4th Sept	Time TBC	Morning Worship (Eco Group)
Mon 5 th Sept	9.30 am	Tiny Time (Church Hall)
	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Wed 7 th Sept	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
	2.00 pm	Contemplative Prayer Meeting (Cottage)
	3.00 pm	Development Worker's Meeting (Cottage)
Thurs 8 th Sept	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Sat 10 th Sept	9.30 am	Prayer Meeting (Secret Garden/Coffee Room)

10 th cont...	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
Sun 11th Sept	Time TBC	Morning Worship (Revd David Herbert)
Mon 12 th Sept	9.30 am	Tiny Time (Church Hall)
	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Wed 14 th Sept	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
	n/a	Contemplative Prayer (Reflection sent by e-mail; contact: alexa@barberfamily.me.uk)
Thurs 15 th Sept	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Fri 16 th Sept	Last date for articles for the October/November magazine	
Sat 17 th Sept	9.30 am	Prayer Meeting (Secret Garden/Coffee Room)
	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
Sun 18th Sept	Time TBC	Communion Service (Methodist Preacher) Commitment for Life Sunday

Mon 19 th Sept	9.30 am	Tiny Time (Church Hall)
	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Wed 21 st Sept	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
	n/a	Contemplative Prayer (Reflection sent by e-mail; contact: alexa@barberfamily.me.uk)
Thurs 22 nd Sept	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Sat 24 th Sept	9.30 am	Prayer Meeting (Secret Garden/Coffee Room)
	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)
Sun 25th Sept	Time TBC	Morning Worship (Mr Peter Gardner) Traidcraft Stall
Mon 26 th Sept	9.30 am	Tiny Time (Church Hall)
	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)
Wed 28 th Sept	10.00 am	Way In (Coffee Room)
	10.30 am	The Other Way In (Secret Garden)

28 th cont...	n/a	Contemplative Prayer (Reflection sent by e-mail; contact: alexa@barberfamily.me.uk)
Thurs 29 th Sept	2.00 pm	Gardening Session (Secret Garden)

A final thought

Drinking from My Saucer

I've never made a fortune and it's probably too late now.
 But I don't worry about that much, I'm happy anyhow.
 And as I go along life's way, I'm reaping better than I
 sowed.

I'm drinking from my saucer,
 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I don't have a lot of riches, and sometimes the going's
 tough.
 But I've got loved ones around me, and that makes me rich
 enough.

I thank God for his blessings, and the mercies He's
 bestowed.

I'm drinking from my saucer,
 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went wrong, my faith wore
somewhat thin.
But all at once the dark clouds broke, and the sun peeped
through again.
So God, help me not to gripe about the tough rows that
I've hoed.
I'm drinking from my saucer,
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

If God gives me strength and courage, when the way
grows steep and rough.
I'll not ask for other blessings, I'm already blessed enough.
And may I never be too busy, to help others bear their
loads.
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer,
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

John Paul Moore

Supplied by Malcom Smith



(John Moore was a Manx poet and privateer of the late 18th Century. Originally from Camlork, in Braddan, Isle of Man,^[1] Moore later settled in Bride, where he owned an inn. It was here that he came to be known as "John the Tiger" due to his often singing the song describing his time as the privateer on board The Tiger.)

Elders



If you have any problems and would like to contact someone, please get in touch with the Secretary, your designated Elder or any other Elder as given below.

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Contact us



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We hope you have enjoyed the magazine and we invite you to worship with us at High Street, Northallerton at our Sunday service.

Please note that the closing date for items for the October/November issue is 16th September