

Magazine

October/November 2020

Harvesting for the future

Secret Garden news

On the threshold



Zion
United
Reformed
Church

~ Northallerton ~

Zion and Community

These are the weekly activities that would normally take place.
They will be reinstated as soon as possible

Sunday 10.00 a.m.	Morning worship During the pandemic it will be bright and early with a warm welcome every other week
Monday 9.30 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. In term time	Tiny time Mums, come and join us in the Church Hall for a chat and a cuppa while the children play
Wednesday 10.00 a.m. to 12 noon	The other 'Way In' no coffee or tea but time for a chat in the Secret Garden
12 noon to 12.30 p.m.	A chance to sit and eat your packed lunch warm and dry
1.00 p.m. to 1.30 p.m.	Market Day service A time for quiet reflection in the midst of a busy day
Saturday 10.00 a.m. to 12 noon	The other 'Way In' More chat in the Secret Garden

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

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Pastoral letter

Dear Friends,

Traditionally, this is the time of Harvest Festivals. In years gone by when people were much closer to the land this was a telling celebration of the year's yield after all the crops had been gathered in. In our urbanised and globalised community, though, Harvest has a different feel. What can it mean to us when the vast majority of us do not till the soil for our food (except perhaps for a few vegetables from the garden)? Harvest could be just a nostalgic throwback to an agrarian lifestyle none of us are really old enough to know, like a re-enactment of life in a medieval village or in an eighteenth-century manor house. Or it could be just about local church traditions – 'we do harvest this way' – when it is just a matter of replicating what we have always done.

Or we might recognise the global nature of the food chain and make Harvest a time to remember producers in the developing world and how different their lives are to ours. We might hear the story of the cocoa growers who have never tasted chocolate and could never afford to buy any. Or we might hear accounts of how Fair Trade has changed the lives of farmers in Africa, South America, or Asia. We can make Harvest a Commitment for Life event.



Yet again, we may turn our thoughts to closer to home. We may think of the people in the UK who struggle desperately, but fail through no fault of their own, to make ends meet. We may recall the growing need, even among people in work, to turn to food banks to put food on the table. And so, Harvest may become about helping others by donating to the food bank.

Or we might think ecologically – yes even in our urbanised settings. The news of wildfires in California or devastating floods in the Caribbean, of record-breaking Spring temperatures and a wet Summer may underline for us the issue of climate change. David Attenborough's TV series may present us so visually with the message of various reports about the impact on biodiversity and the impending extinction of so many species unless we do something about it now. So, we could focus Harvest on the green agenda.

Alternatively, we can see Harvest as a real celebration of what God has given to us. Yes, Harvest is about the recognition of this world as God's wonderful Creation entrusted to our care – a gift for us to treasure rather than to exploit ruthlessly and carelessly. Yes, Harvest is about justice and fairness in the economy of production and consumption – it is about truly loving and caring for all our fellow human beings, near and far. All this should be at the heart of the traditions we keep and at the heart of the traditions we begin. Harvest is not about reverting to a past, but about looking to a future – God's kingdom of harmony in Creation, and justice and care in human society.

Even in this Covid era, celebrate Harvest with thanks to God for all his gifts.

Yours in His love,
Stephen

*Earth is the Lord's: it is ours to enjoy it,
ours, as his stewards, to farm and
defend.*

F. Pratt Green

Creating in the pandemic

The preparations required to re-start worship in the hall and to make it as Covid safe as possible was a bit of a challenge. Even more of a challenge is to transform the “school exam hall” appearance into a warm, welcoming and inspirational space for our worship – not an easy task with socially distanced chairs, masks, overcoats and no fellowship over coffee!!

On our first Sunday back, two things made a big impact on me:

- Our church family – each one a much-loved individual, each one of us reflecting a little bit of God in different ways, but also the “empty” chairs of those who couldn’t be with us. It underlined the church as being the people of God and not the buildings, but it also highlighted the difficulties of sharing and encouraging each other when forcibly distanced by the pandemic. I came away hungry for meaningful conversation beyond that act of worship.
- The banners! Alexa had carefully revived some very old and tired banners which softened the appearance of the hall and helped reduce its echoic nature just a little. Images or a few short words can speak very powerfully about God and our journeys in faith.



It occurred to me that creating some new banners together (or other things such as paintings, poetry or photos etc.) might help in many ways. The creative process of sharing ideas, stories and different skills could potentially be of even more value than our (obviously beautiful!) end products. It is certainly a project that could bring some light into the darkness of this winter.

We can already share ideas over the phone, over zoom or during the Other Way In, and, with a little more preparation we will shortly be able to meet in groups of up to six - albeit with masks and socially distanced.

It is easy to think "I'm not creative" or "I can't sew/ paint/ write" – but we all have some experience of a journey of faith with God (no matter how seemingly tenuous and barren or rich and fruitful), and we will all have an image/ images which have really spoken to us, or quotes that have been helpful. These may act as a source of inspiration for others to actually convert into a banner or similar.

If you are interested in taking part in any way, please let me know..... And start noticing what images or words feed your faith and could be shared with others.

Liz Styan

Talking point

...stimulated by a letter to the Editor

Thanks for the many good thoughts – not least re the Quakers' life and witness – in Paul's timely article 'We Are All Equal', in the last issue of our magazine. but there are, I suggest, two issues he raised and left up in the air, unanswered:

a) that there are disagreements and contradictions in the Bible text. Yes, indeed there are. But experience teaches, if that's where we begin and what we focus on, we'll never get anywhere with it. Rather, our approach should be – with any part of the text – 'Take up and read,' (as Augustine heard and did), 'and ask, What is God saying to me/to us thro' this

passage?’ Sometimes, perhaps, He may even be saying, ‘Come on, rejoice that the human writers of My message got it 95% right, don’t waste your and all our time and effort by stumbling over the 5% they mistook...’.

b) that one day, not only will Black Lives Matter, but all of us human beings shall indeed be equal (in dignity, respect and affection), but only at Kingdom Come - - - so true - - - and this as we know from early Negro spirituals was virtually the only consolation available to the 18th-19th and even some 20th century African slaves on the Caribbean and American plantations... Yet can we seriously leave out (as I fear Paul does) any mention of God’s calling us all to pray and act right now for this mutual equality and regard here on earth? Why raise problems unless we also offer Jesus’ answers?

With concerned love,

Malcolm Smith

.....

Thank you, Malcolm for your reaction to my article...in the debating tradition of the men’s group!

Overwhelmingly, the Bible guides our Christian lives, especially in the example of Jesus, who, against his contemporary odds, taught that ‘all lives matter’. However, the Bible’s text, warts and all on this topic, is simply honest in presenting slavery through various eras as an accepted cultural norm. Indeed, elsewhere in the world too, conquest/slavery has been an obvious recurring thread throughout all human history. And Britain has been on both sides of that equation. Offender and offended. All regrettable, but indisputable.

As, sadly, is inequality - whether in opportunity, status, birthright, education, wealth or health. Nature and nurture both seem to exacerbate it too. Presumably we have corrupted God’s plan. In reality, modern society’s tricky task is to facilitate true mobility,

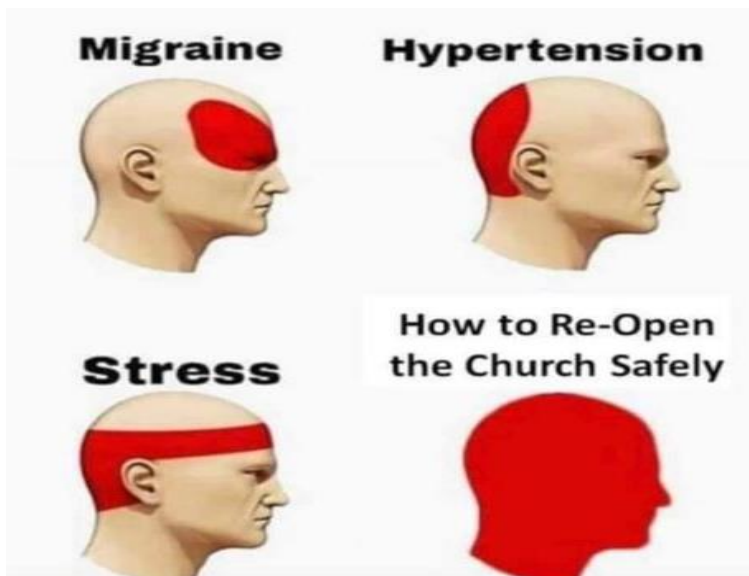
alongside meanwhile also caring for the 'least'. A goal worth aspiring to, if continually elusive. And certainly, Christians can and do take an inspiring leading role. The world is still a disparate place, but of course we preach and pray for universal justice and respect 'on earth as it is in heaven'.

Paul Bowes

Have you any thoughts you'd like to add? All welcome at sue.kennedy123@btinternet.com

Types of headache

Especially for the New Normal group – with many thanks for the hours of work you've put in.



With a smile

It was bed-time. 'Tom,' his Mother called out, 'why are you in the shower again at this time?'

'Because I want an apple for my supper.'

'And what's an apple got to do with having a shower?'

'Because I've learnt at school today, we shouldn't eat apples unwashed.'

*Anon
via Malcolm Smith*

Church diary

At last some dates for the diary – not many it's true but it's a start. If you have anything that you would like to add when the December and January magazine comes round just let us know (Eds)

Tues 6 th Oct	7.00 pm	New normal group -Zoom
Sun 11 th Oct	10.00 am	Morning worship (Jan Harper)
	3.00 pm	Farewell event for Hilary and Stephen Collinson - Zoom
Tues 13 th Oct	7.00 pm	New normal group -Zoom
Sun 18 th Oct	10.00am	Extra service Morning worship with the Moderator Rev David Herbert

Tues 20 th Oct		Reading Circle review date - email
	7.00 pm	New normal group -Zoom
Sun 25 th Oct	10.00 am	Morning worship (leader tba)
Tues 27 th Oct	7.00 pm	New normal group -Zoom
	10.00 pm	Elders' meeting - Zoom
	7.00 pm	New normal group-Zoom
Sun 8 th Nov	10.00 am	Morning worship for Remembrance Sunday (leader tba)
Tues 10 th Nov	7.00 pm	New normal group -Zoom
Tues 17 th Nov	7.00 pm	New normal group -Zoom
Sun 22 nd Nov	10.00 am	Morning worship (Chris Eddowes)
Tues 24 th Nov	7.00 pm	New normal group -Zoom

Update from the Elders

As you may know, the Elders have been writing and revising policy documents. Whilst this is an on-going process, we think it is important to ensure that church members are aware of the range of policies we currently have and how they can be accessed. The documents cover the following topics and, where appropriate, include Covid-19 guidance:

Accountability and Management Structure; Baptism; Communion; Data Protection; Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures; Employee Code of Conduct; Equality and Diversity; Financial Procedures; Fire Procedures; Funerals; Health and Safety; Lone Working; Marriage; Memorandum of Understanding; Reserves; Risk Assessment; Room Hire; Safeguarding (including Photographic Policy); Safety Arrangements; Trauma Response; Volunteer Code of Conduct.

In due course, it is our intention to keep a folder containing all these policies in the vestry for reference.

The Secret Garden currently has the following policy documents:

Confidentiality and Privacy; Coronavirus Policy and Risk Assessment for Public Access; Coronavirus Policy and Risk Assessment for Volunteers; Coronavirus Policy for Users; Equality and Diversity; Health and Safety; Induction Checklist; Lone Working; Organizational Structure and Terms of Reference for Secret Garden Committee; Provision and Use of Equipment; Recruitment of Ex-offenders; Risk Assessments; Risk Assessment Procedure; Safeguarding; Sharps Policy; Team Leader Information and Application Form; User Agreement; Volunteer Booklet and Agreement; Volunteer Information and Application Form; Volunteer Policy.

If you wish to know more about any of the policies, please contact Christine Roddam for Church Policies or Liz Styan for Secret Garden Policies.

There are three policies that the Elders particularly wish to draw to your attention:

Equality and Diversity

This policy states that we believe all people are created in God's image and are loved by God. It reminds us that Jesus showed God's love by his openness to all people, including those who were marginalised in his day; it affirms our church's commitment

to show the same openness and respect to all people in today's world by acknowledging our intention to promote equality of opportunity and diversity in all spheres of activity and our commitment to behave as an equal opportunity church.



Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Policy is a detailed document, providing much useful information. I quote from its opening section:

We define safeguarding as the promotion of the safety and welfare of children and adults who are at risk of or are experiencing harm, abuse or neglect in all forms. We acknowledge children's and adults' right to protection from any form of abuse or neglect regardless of age, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. Therefore, as members and workers of the church, we are committed to:

- *the safeguarding and protection of all children and adults at risk;*
- *the establishment of a loving church environment which is safe and caring for all people and where the dignity of each person is respected;*
- *an informed vigilance about the dangers of all forms of abuse, harm and neglect within all aspects of work in the church, and how to respond appropriately;*
- *ensuring everyone who engages with the life of the church is responsible for keeping people safe;*
- *working together with voluntary/statutory agencies and other denominations and faith-based organisations.*

We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent any form of abuse and neglect of children and adults and ensure the well-being and pastoral care of those who are or may be at risk.

Jane Haslam is our Safeguarding Officer and Alexa Barber is her Deputy.

Data Protection

This policy outlines the church's commitment to protecting the personal data of people in relation to our church's work in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, as regulated by the Information Commissioner's Office, and to carrying out any data processing with transparency, accountability and good governance. Our Data Protection Officer is Judith Puttock.

Other Key Policies

- a) **Volunteer Code of Conduct** – As most of us carry out volunteer duties on behalf of the church, a copy of this document will be displayed on the notice board in the coffee lounge. When appropriate, please make time to read it.
- b) **Lone Working** – If you carry out any tasks on your own in the church buildings or grounds, please ask for a copy of this document.
- c) **Safety Arrangements** – This important policy also has an accompanying training video and emergency contact details.
- c) **Trauma Response** – In the event of a major incident, additional Trauma Response Packs can be found in the cupboard in the small vestry and the corner cupboard in the cottage. These contain useful telephone numbers e.g. local disaster response, gas supplier, plumber etc.

Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions about policy documents or would like to receive a copy by e-mail or post.

Christine Roddam

Secret Garden

Spring & Summer 2020

What a strange spring and summer we have had. It has been very challenging in so many ways; each person has had a completely different experience depending on their circumstances and for many the repercussions of these last few months will reverberate for a long time to come – both positive and negative.

One thing that has run like a steady, reassuring thread throughout has been the natural world. For many this has been a real lifeline. We have been acutely aware that at the very time the balm of nature has been most needed, we had to shut the



garden to our community. In a way, this redoubled our commitment to tend the garden and plant vegetables so that when lockdown was eased there would be beauty to be enjoyed and produce to share. Each day of the week someone different tended the garden. Two of our volunteers share their experience:

Philippa writes:

After a month of Lockdown and staying at home, I became part of the Secret Garden's watering team. Together we kept the Garden alive, well and prospering. It was wonderful having a legitimate reason to 'venture out' with a purpose and a positive destination.

It was good to be in the serenity of the Garden and to remember the 'Old Normal' of comradery, cosy tea-breaks, celebrations that involved a lot of cake and a lot of conversations!

It was a joy to see seedlings flourish, flowers come into full bloom, and fruit and vegetables into season, it gave us hope that the

season of Lockdown would come to an end and a new season was on its way.....

As I was a lone worker, I asked a friend, who manages the maintenance at the Garden to be my 'telephone buddy'. Together we are now completing the re-vamp of the "Works End" by developing a Woodland Planting Area. With our 2 heads metaphorically together, we have had great fun.

For each member of the Team it gave a time frame during the week and a few hours to enjoy the garden, some sat quietly, some watched the birds, some took photos, and some sent texts and pictures to other people in the group. For all of us, we felt part of the Community again.

Lucy writes:

During the "Lockdown" distinguishing one day from another could be quite difficult. Days of the week started to take on different names: Thursday became "Clapping Day" (when we stood on our doorstep and applauded NHS workers and other key workers), Sunday was virtual "Church Day" and Tuesday became "Secret Garden Day".

When Liz and Dave asked for volunteers to water the Garden we jumped at the chance. At first our visits seemed quite clandestine. We would furtively unlock the padlock at the back gate and enter cautiously. Almost immediately, we fell under the disarming spell of the glorious, ever- evolving flora and melodious birdsong that greeted us. The calming effect of the tranquillity was immediate.

Unfortunately, whenever our family of five visited the tranquillity wasn't long lasting! Watering with the hose pipe became a competitive sport. Invariably one child would go home needing a change of clothes! We fell into a pattern: someone would water the vegetables while one would play in the mud kitchen, one take



pictures of the ever-growing garden and then all of us would check for tadpoles and frogs in the two ponds.

On a couple of occasions, we decided to investigate the aquatic life of the Secret Garden further and have a go at pond dipping. It was a fun activity and also conveniently covers a few bases on the Science National Curriculum! We found water slaters, a water beetle, a frog and quite a lot of tadpoles. We made a video of the pond dipping adventure. If you would like to take a look here is the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxFkyETndmU&feature=youtu.be>

As a family, we are so grateful to have been given the opportunity to spend precious (though not always peaceful) hours in the Secret Garden and we feel for us it really is a," safe space where both people and wildlife can flourish".

Emerging to a "New Normal"

Gardening

Knowing that for many of us social isolation was starting to take its toll, we tentatively seized the opportunity to restart our Monday and Thursday gardening sessions on the 15th June with just six people per session, social distancing and hygiene measures in



place – just in the nick of time to help pick the bumper harvest of strawberries, raspberries and gooseberries! It is a shame that not all of our volunteers are able to join us just yet for a variety of reasons.

Despite a newly repaired and waterproof garage roof we haven't been able to christen it as a group shelter from the rain due to Coronavirus!

"The Other Way In" - From 1st August the Church has re-opened the garden for our community on market day mornings (Wednesday and Saturday 10am – 12MD) – the outdoor Covid

19 alternative to our usual welcoming “Way In” of coffee, tea & a biscuit..... But, sadly, without the usual refreshments. We hope the garden will be all the refreshment that is need!

The Living Rooms restarted their “Renew Wellbeing” sessions using the Secret Garden from the 31st July on Monday and Friday mornings. For more information on this please contact info@thelivingrooms.org.uk.

We continue to explore other new ways in which the garden can provide a safe and inspirational space for both people and nature to flourish.

Liz Styan

Live and learn

If a child lives with criticism,
He learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility,
He learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule,
He learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame,
He learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance,
He learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement,
He learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise,
He learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness,
He learns justice.

If a child lives with security,
He learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval,
He learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
He learns to give love in the world.

We all need to teach the way to live.

Anon
Via Hazel Sumsion

Small steps

When you live in poverty, the reality is that you survive by working together. It's why setting up associations and farmers groups is an integral part of Traidcraft Exchange's work – because we know people are stronger when they unite. In isolation, farmers and artisans are vulnerable to exploitation. They can't access government help, or take collective action. This, sadly, is still the case for thousands of people in the communities we have yet to reach. But when farmers and artisans come together, they can demand fair prices, buy and sell collectively, and build up savings. Recently, we've seen the amazing work done by farmers' groups in Bangladesh - who, unable to sell their vegetables at markets or meet together for training due to lockdowns, have distributed their harvests to the very poorest and offered a lifeline of support to their neighbours. Julekha, a group president, explained: 'Because of the [Traidcraft Exchange] project, we are now financially strong and we got the idea to help the poor. This was a decision we all took together.'

The coronavirus crisis has underlined how much we all depend on one another, no matter how far apart we are. As we look

towards recovering from this crisis, we know that we have the chance to do things differently in the future. But to make big change, the kind that transform lives, many people must take many small steps together. Working together to build joint savings schemes and establish associations means people not only have a safety net in times of crisis, but they can invest in long term

change– buying new seeds to diversify their crops, or better farming equipment which they otherwise couldn't afford. Coming together in a formal group empowers people – to take charge of their own fate, challenge unfair structures or exploitative prices, and support others around them. Those small first steps – registering a group, opening a bank account together – are part of a bigger journey. That's why our Small Steps community is so important. Small Steps is a community of people who give faithfully, just a little each month, to help not just one or two people, but whole communities leave poverty behind for good. Because together, we are stronger and more resilient - no matter how far physically apart we stay. If you'd like to set up a regular gift, and join the Small Steps Community, or learn more go to www.traidcraftexchange.org/

The crossing place

In the crafting of the pattern and weave of traditional Indian fabrics for a specific purpose, all draped thresholds are important, and needing protection and safeguarding from evil; yes, in terms of the clothed body, but also to ensure safety of 'place'.

Wells, springs, crossroads, washbasins, mirrors, windows, and hearts...The threshold (doorway) was the most significant place in the home, as it represented the crossing place from one life to

another, from public to private and from community to family. It required special protection. Claire Hunter

Which reminds me about a recent experience.

I am in a retreat house specifically to write in the peace and quiet whilst everyone else here is on a fully silent retreat. The doorbell rings loudly, 'bing-bong'. So, I go to the door as everyone else here is doing Holy things at that moment. There standing hopefully is a bulky, jolly white van delivery man who is waiting on the threshold with a large, floaty Happy Birthday helium balloon, a profuse wicker basket of flowers and an enormous box of designer chocolates.

Reading the card of greeting, I whisper, 'Please bring them in and I will give them to her later.' He replied, also in a whisper, 'Well, I need her signature.' Whispering, 'I am sorry, but I cannot disturb her at this moment', he responds whispering 'Well,



will you sign then?' 'Yes', I whisper in return. Then he booms out with a chuckle in surprised realisation, 'Why are we b***** whispering to each other?' I said quietly, 'Because this is a retreat house and today it is in complete silence.' He looks horrified and turns to bolt out of the door...but oh help, he is unable to turn the handle because it has a special safety lock on it. He can't get out! Is he locked into this mad place? He turned to me shocked and hopeful...and mercifully for him, in compassion I kindly enable his speedy escape.

The doorway then, a sacred space. Of many Biblical texts I remember, one I always think of as interesting and worth further pondering is, 'It is better to be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, than to dwell in the rich man's tent.' I find myself inappropriately passing on this affirmation when someone has kindly held a door open for me...they probably think I am mad!

Ann Bowes

How others see us

In July, missionary Munshi Dev Tado was martyred by suspected Maoist Naxalite attackers. The 28 year old was taken to a forest near his home in Gadchiroli district and shot. He leaves a wife, three young daughters and a son. Munshi was a former member of the militant communist Naxalite group and participated in the persecution of Christian families in the area. He converted to Christianity, left the Naxalites and began his ministry, opening a church on his own land. He had twice been ordered to stop his missionary work by Naxalites.

Christians P Jeyaraj (59) and his son Emmanuel Benicks (31) were tortured to death in police custody in Tamil Nadu State. In June they were arrested for breaking Covid-19 regulations by keeping their shop open outside permitted hours. CCTV footage showed all local shops open at the time of arrest and the father and son uninjured.

The pair were savagely beaten by the police and Hindu extremists. Taken before a magistrate covered in blood from their injuries they were remanded back into police custody. Emmanuel died the next day and his father the morning after. After the story became public 5 police officers were arrested.

Indian police are often accused of either refusing to record, or being reluctant to investigate, violence and hate crimes against Christians. The Evangelical Fellowship of India recorded 366 incidents in 2019, a rise from 325 in 2018. Church leaders in India have called for a full investigation into these deaths.

Pray for the families of those killed. Remember also, all Indian Christians who live under increasing threat of violence or attack.

Barnabas Fund (Coventry) (Edited)
Supplied by Malcolm Smith

Elders' duty rota

If you have any problems and would like to speak with someone please contact the Ministers (until 11th Oct), Secretary, your designated Elder or the Duty Elder as given below

Week beginning

October

4th Christine Roddam

11th Liz Styan

18th Paul Bowes

25th Sue Bush

November

1st Jane Haslam

8th Jo Kennedy

15th Judith Puttock

22nd Christine Roddam

29th Liz Styan



Contact us



Ministers:	Rev Hilary Collinson and Rev Stephen Collinson	01748 821586
Secretary:	Susan Bush	01609 882468
Treasurer:	Judith Puttock	01609 771282
Organist:	Carol Hogg	01609 883319
Booking:	Jane Haslam	01609 774641
For Rooms		
For Church	Christine Roddam	01609 776693
services		
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Church:	Answerphone N.B. No incoming message facility	01609 779610
Website:	www.tsurc.org/	



We hope you have enjoyed the magazine and when we are able to open again, we invite you to worship with us at High Street, Northallerton at our 10 a.m. Sunday service.

**Please note that the closing date
for items for the
December/January issue is 20th
November**