

Letter from Church Secretary



What do you associate with Easter time? Chocolate eggs (obviously!), bunny rabbits, lambs frolicking in the fields, daffodils (also known as Lenten lilies), ducklings. All things that link with new birth, new beginnings.



I am reminded of a C S Lewis quote

"You cannot go back and change the beginning- but- you can start where you are and change the ending."

How can we do this? I believe we can do this by trusting in the risen Lord. The disciples were ordinary men, they got it wrong, they often misunderstood, they made mistakes, they let Jesus down, they denied Him. Jesus knew that whatever the disciples did or didn't do would not change the outcome for Him and yet He continued to love and teach and share with them. I am sure that we too often get things wrong, misunderstand, let Jesus down, even deny Him. The good news is that Jesus died for each one of us and rose again that we might know His love and power today. Life is full of difficult events, full of challenges, hampered by our own doubts and yet the miracle of Easter Day reminds that God loves us just as we are.

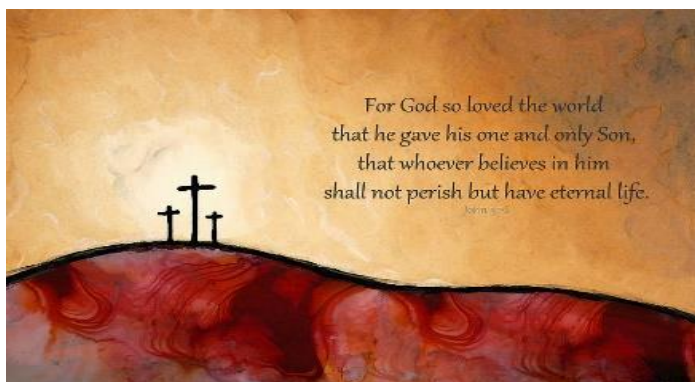
Jesus Christ is Risen He is Risen Indeed

Before Easter there is Lent, a period of preparation, penitence, prayerful consideration, and patience. A time to reflect on all that God has done for us and yet look forward to all that He has yet to achieve in us. Easter is just around the corner. A time of new beginnings. A time to move forward and trust in God's eternal love for us all. Through the darkness of Good Friday we look forward to the light and resurrection of Easter Sunday. Jesus Christ is Risen! Let us not forget this. Even when we feel the darkness of Good Friday weighing heavily upon us, hold fast because Easter Sunday is coming.

Jesus Christ is Risen He is Risen Indeed

This time last year we were just awaiting approval of a start date for the repairs to the roof – was that really only a year ago? The roof is now secure, and we are back into the building. This year we are once again awaiting Synod approval in order to move forward with the renovation of downstairs.

New beginnings occur all the time We face yet again a new beginning in our church ministry and I pray that at the centre of all we do we place the Risen Christ. May we as a church always 'preach the word, live the word and share the word'



For God so loved the world
that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him
shall not perish but have eternal life.
John 3:16

Jesus turned the world upside down. Rather than ride a magnificent horse he chose a donkey. Instead of being an aggressor, he was a preacher. In place of revenge and retribution He offered love.

**Jesus Christ is Risen
He is Risen Indeed.**

Hallelujah

Dot Thomson

STOP PRESS – The Northern Synod Trust has approved our grant application for £140,603! Subject to approval by the Listed Buildings Committee (See below)

From the Editors Chair Hello Readers!

As Easter approaches Dot's letter reminds us of what God has done for us and what we trust he will do for us in the future. This issue includes a heartfelt plea from Harry M (our internet genius) for us to get more involved in spreading the word about the exciting things that are happening in our church. There are also photos and reports from the events that are taking place. Hope you enjoy it! Harry B

Preachers for April – May

Apr	2 nd	Dot Thomson	May	7 th	Maranny Jones
	6 th	Rev J Elliston (Maundy Thursday 8pm)			
	7 th	Joint Service (Pease Statue 11am)			
	9 th	Rev J Elliston (Easter Sunday)	14 th		Rev J Bowers (Christian Aid)
	16 th	Meg Thomson	21 st		Harry Bunting
	23 rd	Eve Mortimer	28 th		TBA
	30 th	Chris Eddowes (Communion)			

Spring Fair

It was great to have our Spring Fair once again in Northgate on Saturday 18th March.

There were so many Easter eggs for the Egg Tombola that we had to use two tables!

The cake stall was full too and there was little left at the end.

It was, as always, a delight to see so many chickens on the craft stall along with other critters. There was a spectacular Gonk which has now found a good home. The craft ladies had been busy and, as one event finishes, they start working for the next.

Margaret and Paul were kept busy on the raffle table which was loaded with prizes.

There was a separate raffle for a Simnel cake made by Margaret. Despite buying more tickets than I usually buy I didn't win it, but it too went to a good home as Elizabeth Milligan won it.

Many cups of tea and coffee were made and drunk in a convivial atmosphere, it was good to see a lot of catching up done.

A super morning and as a bonus we made over £500 towards the downstairs refurbishment.

Thanks to everyone for their generosity on the day and to all who made it possible. Maranny

Refurbishment of Downstairs Hall (Phase 2) - Update

The situation on the refurbishment is that our presentation to the Synod Trust Property Subcommittee went very well and they will recommend to the full Trust Meeting that we be given a grant of £140,603.

Unfortunately this meeting has been put back to the 29th March, but I am holding this issue with the hope of confirming that the grant has been approved.

There is one more hurdle to be overcome before the work can start, which is that we have to gain listed buildings approval. We have had a site visit by them which went well and our application is in the process of being submitted for their meeting in early May.

In the meantime the contractor is doing preparatory design work ready for a quick start.

We have had quite an interest in hiring the Sanctuary and the Tiny Tots Nursery from next door are visiting us for an Easter Service. Also a Holiday Club and a Mums and Toddlers group are meeting in April Harry B

Making Use of Our Safe and Friendly Space Online

Those who keep up with our Northgate URC Facebook Group will have recently seen an upsurge in online interest in our activities. As a result I'm delighted to see the Facebook group membership increasing steadily. At the time of writing we have 156 members of the group.

Darlington and district residents, as well as other internet users, are noticing us.

This often raises the question "how safe are we from online trolling and abuse?"

We can offer the following reassurance:-

Membership of our group is heavily regulated. Applicants go through a "vetting process" before being granted member status. Equally, any post or comment submitted to the group from anyone other than an administrator is subject to strict vetting before being published. (We have 3 administrators - Harry M, Harry B and Graham Aird)

So, not only do we strive to be a friendly space online for visitors, but we also remain vigilant and maintain protection against any undesirable material or language being shown on our pages. Unsolicited advertising and potential "scam" posts are also screened out before they can appear on the group posts page.

As we move forward with our plans to offer spaces in the Church building for wider use by the community, I feel that it is important for us to raise our online profile even further by making **more effective use** of our online presence.

Our most important asset in the marketing and advertising of our Church facilities and activities, both secular and religious, is YOU, the members and friends of the church who read this magazine.

The Facebook Group page is used to notify and advertise upcoming events in connection with Northgate.

This information is there for our own group members and can be used to "share" with members' friends or to other relevant groups where they are members.

This is marketing for our Church. It raises our profile and encourages people to join us for both spiritual and secular activities.

I personally share every group post with my own friends list (over 200 people who I have some sort of connection with and they with me). I share to local news groups and shared interest groups in the Darlington area. This means that I can create a potential audience of over 40,000 viewers for Northgate URC posts.

If you have never 'shared' before, please have a word with me (**phone: 07933 525709 or email: harry@sams-online.co.uk**) and I will be delighted to help you.

I really would appreciate the support of existing group members and hope to see a much higher level of shares being notified.

If you are an internet user, and have not yet joined our Facebook group, you can find us here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/urcdarlington> Harry M

Challenge

Our Mothering Sunday Service on the 19th March was led by Maranny Jones. A relaxed 'cafe church' style with lots of family groups worshipping together seated at tables.

There was a challenge issued to find as many words as possible using the letters from 'Mothering Sunday'. One table produced a staggering **307 words** - Val, Pat and Colin left us all in the starting blocks. They reckoned that there were still a few more to find but ran out of time.

Can anyone top that total? Harry M



Photos from our very successful Spring Fair which raised over £500 for the refurbishment of the downstairs hall .

Details of our next Event.

April Fool Pancake Party

April 1st at 3pm



APRIL FOOL PANCAKE PARTY

FAMILY QUIZ, GAMES, PANCAKES
AND SING-A-LONG

NORTHGATE URC CHURCH

SATURDAY 1ST APRIL 2023 AT 3.00PM

ADULTS £5.00 STUDENTS £2.00

UNDER 5'S FREE

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM
JANET MORTIMER & MARGARET COCKRILL