

Annan United Reformed Church

www.annan.urc.org.uk



January 2017 Newsletter



QUESTIONS NEED ANSWERS

If you were asked what is our congregation like, how would you answer? What are our aims and how is it planned to achieve them? A handbook quoted previously says the great danger for the Church is that it has become a 'monument' rather than a 'movement' – it stands still rather than developing and maturing.

Worship is still the main focus of attention for the majority of church members. Could you help to plan and lead worship, or participate in some other way? We need to share duties, share stories and experiences to get to know one another better. Welcoming folk at the door helps to set the right atmosphere for worship, and inviting others to share in after service refreshments adds to the fellowship within the congregation.

Social activities can make an important contribution to the building up of congregations and the development of Christian Fellowship. The Tea and Natter Group, the Games Afternoon and the Friday Fellowship are all-age events, and look for your support.

Do you have ideas to help the continued development of the church family? Bring them to the next Church Meeting. We might be without a Minister at the present time, but that requires all of us to be active and welcoming whenever we have opportunities to talk about what God is doing for us in our lives.

Haydn Higton

~~~~~

## WORDS OF WISDOM FOR THE NEW YEAR

Take the chance that comes today:  
Tomorrow may not do;  
Yesterday is in the past -  
Today is bright and new.  
Don't let the opportunity  
Start to fade away;  
Do the very things you know  
Are wiser done today.

Church Gardener

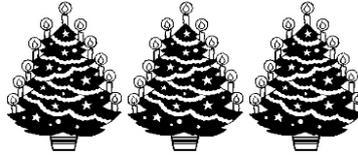
~~~~~

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

This will be celebrated in Annan from 18th to 25th January with the theme 'Crossing Barriers' based around 2 Corinthians 5 vv 14-20. The material for the Week is dedicated to the memories of Revd Stephen Brown who passed away in February 2016 and the Revd Canon Gwynn ap Gwyllin in July 2016, both of whom contributed hymns, prayers and other items to the material used in the services. Stephen was a Minister in the URC Synod of Scotland serving latterly at Helensburgh.

In Annan, the combined Church service is in our building at 6:30pm on Sunday January 22nd, and it will be led by our Synod Moderator, Revd Dr David Pickering. He will also lead our morning worship on that day. It will be encouraging if we could have a good attendance from the church family on both occasions!

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



When I offered to write a footnote on our Christmas Tree Festival, I did wonder where to begin. Obviously, there is only one place – the beginning.

The Fundraising & Social Committee first discussed this event several months ago: firstly deciding on the format, catering suggestions, dates & times. After these decisions were made, then the 'fun' began.

There are many stories which could be told, but they would fill too many pages. It is safe to say that it was time consuming and lots of hard work, but most of all there were lots of laughter, good banter and camaraderie.

Every time we met, someone had come up with another idea, and the term 'I was just thinking' was the start of most conversations – until finally we had to ban it as we were running out of time & energy, and had also had too many sleepless nights. I hope you agree that, when it all finally came together, it was worth all the hard work that went into producing this event.

Grateful thanks must go to all who helped put this festival together. Without all of you who helped in any way, this festival could not have taken place.

I cannot finish without mentioning the husbands of Margaret, Karen and Anne – Jimmie (who most of us thought had moved into the church) was always on hand for tasks us ladies could not handle; Tommy (who I am sure used to cringe whenever I approached him, wondering what he was going to be asked to do next) without whose metalworking skills it would not have been possible to produce some of the exhibits; and finally Eric, to whom thanks for making the wooden Christmas Trees (we had fun with those – and one or two burnt fingers from the glue guns).

Many times, during the putting together of this festival, I did say that this was the last, and if I did maybe suggest another (to use the most underused word in this church) "No" – but, hey, never say never!

Edith Woodman

~~~~~

## UNWANTED PRESENTS

Those Christmas presents that are the wrong colour, flavour or size can help our monthly fund-raising. It may be that you already have several similar items in the cupboard.

Anything that is surplus to your requirements can be left in the "Tombola" box in the church vestibule, and it will be used for the stall at Soup and Sweet Lunches.

## THANK YOU

*The following letter was received from Alan McGougan and read out one Sunday in December; in case you missed it, here is the full text:*

Dear All,

Just a short note to thank you all for the kind gifts as we moved on from Annan and also to those who managed along to Dunfermline for my induction, it was lovely to see you all there.

It was a privilege to serve at Annan as minister and we both leave with happy memories of the time we lived in Annan. I wish you every success for the future.

We are settling in well, but of course early days and much harder to get to know people when you are only seeing them once every 4 or 5 weeks (some Churches I am still to visit).

Best wishes,  
Alan and Trish

~~~~~

1ST ANNAN GIRLS' BRIGADE

Plans for the Brigaders' meetings this Spring term:

Date	Activity	People Involved
01.01.17	Fundraising Ideas	Paula Mitchell
12.01.17	Fundraising Ideas	Paula Mitchell
19.01.17	Dancing with the Juniors	Girls
26.01.17	Life Live It	Paula Mitchell
02.02.17	Life Live It	Paula Mitchell
09.02.17	Fear and Respect	Paula Mitchell
16.02.17	HOLIDAY	
23.02.17	Fear and Respect	Paula Mitchell
02.03.17	In the Frame	Paula Mitchell
09.03.17	In the Frame	Paula Mitchell
16.03.17	Coffee Evening	
23.03.17	Mothers' Day Activities	Paula Mitchell
30.03.17	Fear and Respect	Paula Mitchell

The Brigaders have chosen the following subjects to complete their badge work:

Educational - Butterfly Tee and In the Frame

Spiritual - Bioethics and A Matter of Perspective

Service - Fundraising and Life Live It

Physical - Teenage Body Basics and Fear & Respect

Paula Mitchell

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

At the beginning of the year, it's a good time to review how we spend our time and money. Do we need to make changes? Is it appropriate to channel our time into different activities, and how do we feel when we are challenged about our faith?

When the Church accounts are given, most months show Expenditure greater than Income, and costs of maintaining buildings rise every year as every householder knows. Do you realise it costs over £45 each week just to insure our buildings – i.e. £1.00 for each person if we have an average attendance? Contributions to the Ministry and Mission Fund cost £435 per week, and we could break down the other costs too. It helps us realise how important our giving each week is for the continuation of the church, and we need to maintain fund-raising activities as well.

Did you see the headline that suggests penny coins should be abolished? We have a bowl on the hymnbook cabinet to collect small change – one or two pennies or 5p or 10p coins – all will help in this coming year. Steradent tubes are available for collecting 20p coins – and so on.

Fund-raising needs everyone to help. If you have ideas to increase our funds, speak to any member of the Fundraising Group, to an Elder, or make your suggestions at the next church meeting.

Haydn Higton

~~~~~

## FRIDAYS IN FAITH

These events are held monthly by Annan Churches Together (ACT) from September to March, followed by a Big Day Out in April.

They offer a safe, sacred space for families and individuals of all ages to explore faith issues in a gentle and unique way, and follow a similar format to the very successful annual Summer Holiday Clubs run by ACT for the children of Annan.

While the sessions are child friendly, absolutely everyone is welcome to come along and enjoy Games/Faith/Fun/Drama/Craft/Fellowship.

The next Fridays in Faith event will be at 7.00pm to 8.30pm on **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January** and takes place in **The Hub, Ednam Street** in Annan.

Annan Churches Together is a group of different Christian churches and denominations, with the same basic calling: to worship God, to share the good news about Jesus Christ and to work for the good of all people. Find out more by visiting their website at: [www.annandalechurches.org.uk](http://www.annandalechurches.org.uk).

~~~~~

BOOKSTALL

Mobile bookcases are planned for the vestibule to enable books that can be read and enjoyed by anyone to be purchased for a small donation. It will be an ongoing project to supplement the bookstall at Soup and Sweet Lunches, hopefully to provide a source of additional income. Books can be obtained or returned whenever the building is open.

AS THE YEAR ROLLS ON

You'd think that now I'm eighty four
Old age would be such a bore.
Puffing and panting to climb the stairs
Even struggling to get out of chairs.

Endless visits to the loo,
Then forgetting what to do.
Continuing through all these tedious ills
The daily grind of taking pills.

My wandering forgetful brain
Again deserts me – yet again
And sadly I am now dismayed
As my deafness needs a hearing aid.

As years roll on, senility
Shows in loss of agility
So football, cricket and tennis too
Are sports I can no longer do.

My stride once strong and straight
Is replaced by a rolling, shuffling gait.
At least, for now, I'm spared the shame
Of having to rely on a zimmer frame.

But cheer up join me in raising a glass
To toast the future as well as the past.
Time for trips down memory lane
Those special moments to re-live again.

There's time to watch, to meditate,
Chat with friends and ruminate;
To watch the young their aims pursue,
So just sit back and enjoy the view.

While others work, we'll have the fun:
The vintage years have just begun.

~~~~~

## COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

Thanks to all who have faithfully supported Commitment for Life since our church has been involved in this very important area of mission within the United Reformed Church, with special emphasis being the need of support in Bangladesh our chosen partner country. The total sent off to Commitment for Life in 2016 was £510, a very good effort, so again many thanks to all involved.

This is much appreciated by the Programme Co-ordinator for Commitment for Life, Linda Mead, and the following is an extract from her letter acknowledging receipt of our contribution for 2016.

***“On behalf of Commitment for Life may I thank you for your contribution of £510 to Commitment for Life. Your church is helping to make a real difference in the lives of some of the world's poorest people and your continued support is very much appreciated.***

***Your church's generosity will bring hope and resilience to people in the projects in our four partner countries. Many of the regions face particular problems at present, such as Bangladesh with flooding and increased violence against minorities.”***

Jim Murray – Annan URC Co-ordinator for Commitment for Life.

## COMMITMENT FOR LIFE - BANGLADESH

The People's Republic of Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated and disaster-prone countries in the world. The country has a population of over 160 million people, of which 80 percent live in rural areas and depend largely on agriculture for their livelihoods.

Christian Aid started working in Bangladesh in 1972, and they are currently working with 19 partners across the country. Partners range from national level policy and advocacy organisations that focus on climate change to partners that work in the field dealing with the issues of secure livelihoods and gender.

As the global climate changes, Bangladesh is likely to experience more than most, making it an 'impact hotspot.' Recent extreme temperatures before the 2015 monsoon demonstrated how average temperature rise can also increase the likelihood of dangerous heatwaves. Both average and extreme rainfall is projected to further increase, which will raise flood risks from the large rivers that meet in the country's floodplains.

This combination of increased flooding and moisture stress means that the 80% of Bangladeshis whose lives depend on agriculture will have to substantially increase their resilience. Despite this overwhelming set of contextual circumstances, over the last year, Christian Aid in Bangladesh has made strides in advancing and contributing towards 'positive change' and 'ending poverty.'

In total, 27,541 beneficiaries have been reached through Christian Aid's resilience livelihoods programmes over the last year. Beneficiaries have been able to increase their income considerably through adopting various new livelihood options including agriculture, fishing and poultry farming. Average household income has increased from BDT 89,502 in 2014/2015, to BDT 100,623 in 2015/2016, indicating progress towards escaping the cycle of poverty for the targeted households.

Christian Aid's work on inclusive markets has made considerable progress in Bangladesh over the last year with diversification in household income being made through activities such as block-batik dying, tailoring, crab fattening, vermin composting, new vegetable cultivation techniques, and cattle rearing for milk. These new sources of income generation have helped vulnerable communities adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.

In order to cope with the unprecedented impact of climate change, 7,728 community members, of which 5,573 are females, are now practising various climate change adaptation measures against various extreme climate events such as floods, droughts, cyclones, waterlogging, salinity intrusion and river erosion. These adaptation measures have included floating gardens, hanging vegetable gardens in water logging areas, saline tolerant rice varieties, saline tolerant maize and sunflowers, and duck and lamb rearing. These have paved the way for increasing and diversifying crop and vegetable production amid extreme and uncertain weather patterns.

## JANUARY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

|                      |                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sun 1 <sup>st</sup>  | New Year Service – 10:30am                                                                                                      |
| Thu 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Girls' Brigade – 6:00pm and every Thursday in term time                                                                         |
| Sun 8 <sup>th</sup>  | Communion Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30am                                                                                  |
| Tue 10 <sup>th</sup> | Knit & Natter - 10:00am and every Tuesday                                                                                       |
| Tue 10 <sup>th</sup> | Games Afternoon – 2:00pm and every Tuesday                                                                                      |
| Tue 10 <sup>th</sup> | Rainbow Tribe & Spectrum – 6:00pm and every Tuesday in term time                                                                |
| Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> | Worship Planning Group – 10:45am                                                                                                |
| Thu 12 <sup>th</sup> | Soup and Sweet Lunches – 11:30am to 1:30pm in the hall                                                                          |
| Fri 13 <sup>th</sup> | ACT Fridays in Faith 7:00pm at the Hub, Ednam Street                                                                            |
| Sun 15 <sup>th</sup> | Morning Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30am                                                                                    |
| Mon 16 <sup>th</sup> | Elders' Meeting                                                                                                                 |
| Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Morning Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30am                                                                                    |
| Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> | ACT joint service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – 6:30pm at Annan URC – with Revd Dr David Pickering – Synod Moderator |
| Mon 23 <sup>rd</sup> | Last date for items for February Newsletter to reach Ruth, please                                                               |
| Fri 27 <sup>th</sup> | Friday Fellowship – 2:00pm Steven & Eleanor Oswald: Photography                                                                 |
| Sun 29 <sup>th</sup> | Morning Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30am                                                                                    |
|                      |                                                                                                                                 |

### A REMINDER TO GROUPS:

We are a Fairtrade Church.

We have committed to:

- Use Fairtrade tea and coffee for all meetings for which we have responsibility
- Move forward on using other Fairtrade products (such as sugar, biscuits, fruit)
- Promote Fairtrade during Fairtrade Fortnight – and through other activities whenever possible.



## DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR JANUARY

| <b>Date</b>          | <b>Old Testament</b>           | <b>New Testament</b>   |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | Isaiah 66:6-14                 | Matthew 12:46-50       |
| Tue 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | Deuteronomy 6:4-15             | John 10:31-end         |
| Wed 4 <sup>th</sup>  | Isaiah 63:7-16                 | Galatians 3:23-4:7     |
| Thu 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Isaiah 12                      | 2 Corinthians 2:12-end |
| Fri 6 <sup>th</sup>  | Isaiah 60:1-9                  | John 2:1-11            |
| Sat 7 <sup>th</sup>  | Genesis 25:19-end              | Ephesians 1:1-6        |
| Mon 9 <sup>th</sup>  | Isaiah 41:14-20                | John 1:29-34           |
| Tue 10 <sup>th</sup> | Exodus 17:1-7                  | Acts 8:26-end          |
| Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> | Exodus 15:1-19                 | Colossians 2:8-15      |
| Thu 12 <sup>th</sup> | Zechariah 6:9-15               | 1 Peter 2:4-10         |
| Fri 13 <sup>th</sup> | Isaiah 51:7-16                 | Galatians 6:14-18      |
| Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> | Leviticus 16:11-22             | Hebrews 10:19-25       |
| Mon 16 <sup>th</sup> | 1 Kings 17:8-16                | Mark 8:1-10            |
| Tue 17 <sup>th</sup> | 1 Kings 19:1-9a                | Mark 1:9-15            |
| Wed 18 <sup>th</sup> | 1 Kings 19:9b-18               | Mark 9:2-13            |
| Thu 19 <sup>th</sup> | Leviticus 11:1-8, 13-19, 41-45 | Acts 10:9-16           |
| Fri 20 <sup>th</sup> | Isaiah 49:8-13                 | Acts 10:34-43          |
| Sat 21 <sup>st</sup> | Genesis 35:1-15                | Acts 10:44-end         |
| Mon 23 <sup>rd</sup> | Ezekiel 37:15-end              | John 17:1-19           |
| Tue 24 <sup>th</sup> | Ezekiel 20:39-44               | John 17:20-end         |
| Wed 25 <sup>th</sup> | Nehemiah 2:1-10                | Romans 12:1-8          |
| Thu 26 <sup>th</sup> | Deuteronomy 26:16-end          | Romans 14:1-9          |
| Fri 27 <sup>th</sup> | Leviticus 19:9-28              | Romans 15:1-7          |
| Sat 28 <sup>th</sup> | Jeremiah 33:1-11               | 1 Peter 5:5b-end       |
| Mon 30 <sup>th</sup> | Jonah 3                        | 2 Corinthians 5:11-21  |
| Tue 31 <sup>st</sup> | Proverbs 4:10-end              | Matthew 5:13-20        |