

Annan United Reformed Church

www.annan.urc.org.uk



April 2017 Newsletter



APRIL WORSHIP AT ANNAN URC

Sunday 2nd April:

Revd Jan Adamson – Communion Service

Prayer Leader:

H McNairn

Bible Readings:

- E Woodman
- J Murray

Sunday 9th April:

Rev Andrew Gebbie – Palm Sunday

Prayer Leader:

N Maxwell

Bible Readings:

- C McCreadie
- J Murray

Sunday 16th April:

Rev Kate Vivers – Easter Sunday

Prayer Leader:

H Higton

Bible Readings:

- L Higton
- M Jones

Sunday 23rd April:

Prayer Leader:

E Woodman

Bible Readings:

- H Higton

Sunday 30th April:

Andrew Morton

Prayer Leader:

J Kidd-Bentley

Bible Readings:

- D Maxwell
- N Maxwell

Note to Prayer Leaders and Readers: visiting Service Leaders have the option to choose their own theme and readings, and may wish to lead prayers themselves. Such information will be given to you as soon as possible.

A MEDITATION

God has created me to do him some definite service.

He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another.

I have my mission; I may never know it in this world, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in the chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for nought.

I shall do good, I shall do his work.

I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep his commandments.

Therefore I will trust him.

Wherever, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away.

If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve him.

He does nothing in vain.

He knows what he is about.

He may take away my friends, he may throw me among strangers.

He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me

... still ...

he knows what he is about.

Cardinal Newman

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## THANK YOU

Dear friends,

Thank you for all your prayers, visits, kind thoughts etc. I am sorry I wasn't able to prepare a March newsletter. I am getting better now, and have been able to free Robert to do a newsletter for April.

I will be glad to return when I can. Meanwhile, I give thanks for all my kind friends in the church, and pray for all the others who are sick at this time.

*Ruth Mitchell*

## CHRISTMAS CHARITY

Two organisations which our church supported with donations from our Christmas offerings have written to thank us. Summaries of their letters are reproduced below.

### From The Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen – dated 19 January 2017

*Thank you for your very kind and generous gift of £20.00. I am especially grateful to you as this is a time of year when our finances may become particularly stretched.*

*If anyone wishes to support our work spiritually then they may like to have a copy of our Prayer Calendar for 2017. This is available as a download from our website ([www.fishermensmission.org.uk](http://www.fishermensmission.org.uk)) or in leaflet form. We very much appreciate people's prayers.*

*Christmas is always considered to be a time for family, but we are also aware that many of our retired fishermen may be facing a time of loneliness and isolation. We also know that many of the fishermen who work on our UK boats are far away from their homes and loved ones at this time. Many of our Port Staff will be providing Christmas celebrations for those who would otherwise be alone and thank you for donating to support this area of our work.*

*We deeply value your support and our intention is to always treat your gift with the utmost respect as a reflection of our gratitude to you.*

*On behalf of all of us here at the Fishermen's Mission and especially from our fishermen and their families, I wish you a very peaceful New Year.  
Warmest wishes.*

*Alison Godfrey, Director of Fundraising*

### From Maggie's Edinburgh Western General Hospital - dated 16 February 2017

*To all at The United Reformed Church Annan,  
On behalf of everyone at Maggie's Edinburgh I would like to thank you for your recent generous donation of £231.00 to our Centre. It is very kind of you all to think of us as your Christmas charity last year.*

*Your support really is greatly appreciated, both by ourselves and the thousands of people who use Maggie's Edinburgh each year. An average of 80 people a day drop in to the Centre for a cup of tea and a chat with one of our Cancer Information & Support Specialists, for an appointment with our Clinical Psychologist or Benefits Adviser, or to attend one of the many courses designed to help people live with, through and beyond a diagnosis of cancer.*

*All our services are provided free of charge to centre-visitors and, as we rely totally on fundraising to both build and run our centres, we really are most grateful indeed for your support.  
Best wishes.*

*Ellie Rossiter - Fundraising Organiser*

## FRIDAY FELLOWSHIP

The first meeting of the Friday Fellowship for 2017 took place in the church on 27<sup>th</sup> January.

Stephen and Eleanor Oswald presented a PowerPoint slideshow on Photography.

Eleanor explained how they became interested in photography since retiring and coming to live in Annan. They had become members of the local photography club. Stephen and Eleanor exhibit their pictures and enter competitions.

The fellowship members were shown many beautiful views around the local area, and further afield; also animals and birds. Stephen explained to those present points about the photos – regarding having the position, angles and background right.

Stephen and Eleanor answered lots of queries concerning photography from fellowship members.

Nan Maxwell expressed thanks on behalf of the fellowship to the Oswalds, for a most enjoyable and informative afternoon.

At the February meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February Miss Lorraine Priestly gave an excellent talk on beekeeping, how to feed the bees, what to do when they swarm, all about the queen bee and the drones, as well as making honey to sell. Lorraine makes candles, balm with different perfumes for dry skin, also lip balm, all from the beeswax.

Lorraine also demonstrated encaustic painting. Using a travel iron and beeswax, she made lovely scenes on postcards.

Nan Maxwell proposed a vote of thanks to Lorraine for a most enjoyable afternoon.

*Marion Kerr*

The Friday Fellowship is open to everyone. We would be delighted to have you join us. Come along, and bring a friend.

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BEING A FRIEND

It's wonderful to know someone who shows how much they care.
A person who, no matter what you know, is always there.
Someone thoughtful, warm and kind, on whom you can depend.
Life is so much brighter when you know you've got a friend.
Good friends are such a blessing – they're heaven's rarest flowers,
Whose presence gives us comfort when life brings us April showers.
They share our laughter and our tears, and go that extra mile
To show how much they care, and bring a happy smile.

Anon.

THE GARDENER'S HYMN

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

But what we never mention, though gardeners know it's true,
Is when he made the goodies, he made the baddies too.

All things spray- and swat-able,
Disasters great and small,
All things paraquat-able,
The Lord God made them all.

The greenfly on the roses, the maggots in the peas,
Manure that fills our noses, he also gave us these.

The fungus on the goosegogs, the clubroot on the greens,
The slugs that eat the lettuce and chew the aubergines.

The drought that kills the fuchsias, the frost that nips the buds,
The rain that drowns the seedlings, the blight that hits the spuds.

The midges and mosquitoes, the nettles and the weeds,
The pigeons in the green stuff, the sparrows on the seeds.

The fly that gets the carrots, the wasp that eats the plums,
How black the gardener's outlook, though green may be his thumbs.

But still we gardeners labour midst vegetables and flowers,
And pray what hits our neighbour's will somehow bypass ours.

Church Gardener

EASTER IS COMING

Annan Churches Together would like your active support for events to emphasise the real meaning of Easter.

1) On Good Friday April 14th, hot cross buns will be given out on the High Street, and prayer requests received. Our church will prepare the buns, and if you can help please give your name to Marion Kerr. Also, if you can spare 30 minutes to give the buns out this will help too.

2) Come to the Holy Week Services, starting at 7.00 pm each weekday evening.

Monday	10 th April	–	St John's Church
Tuesday	11 th April	–	Annan Old Parish Church
Wednesday	12 th April	–	St Columba's Church
Thursday	13 th April	–	United Reformed Church - Communion
Friday	14 th April	–	St Andrew's Church
Sunday	16 th April	–	8.00 am Easter Day Service on the Motte followed by Breakfast in the United Reformed Church Hall.

3) April will also see a "Big Day Out" organised by Fridays in Faith, and this was a day which everyone enjoyed last year. It is intended for youngsters at primary schools, and Marion Kerr or Lyn Higton can give more details.

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## CHILDREN IN THE GARDEN

We might blanch as the children run across the flower beds chasing a ball, or taking chunks out of the grass playing cricket or hockey – but gardens are places where children can learn so much. Whether it is a window box or some pots on the patio, a garden is a place to learn and to grow.

At the beginning of the year we look for white snowdrops pushing up from the frozen earth, and then (as the weather warms) the magnificence of creation is illustrated in flowers and their colours, in crops from the vegetable patch, in blackbirds pulling worms from the grass and bluetits searching for greenfly among the roses.

Encouraged to help, a child learns about caring – plants need to be fed and watered – to be re-potted to thrive. One skill learnt from gardening is patience – much needed in modern life – everything in the garden grows in its own time. There is a season for everything – some things flourish and others die for no apparent reason, and that teaches acceptance of the transient nature of life.

A garden is a place where children planted carefully, given food and watered regularly, kept free from pests and diseases, can grow to learn how to become gardeners of the future, caring for God's creation.

*Haydn Higton*

## NEWS FROM ATLANTA

Many folk will remember that during their ministry in Annan, Connie and Clive Bonner made several trips to Atlanta to help at a Community Centre Project. Connie and Clive went there in December last, and a letter received recently reports:-

'It was a bitter sweet time in Atlanta, as we helped remaining community members close the building at 910 Ponce de Leon and at Dayspring. A good deal of the catering equipment has been passed to other Shelters for the Homeless, and the Dayspring Retreat Centre is being cleared. We helped host and cater for a last roast meal for our Homeless Friends on 12<sup>th</sup> January.

An Open Day was held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January (with all day finger food) and a closing Worship at Atlanta Central Presbyterian Church with three types of Chilli (with turkey, veggie and a less heated version) took place on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January. I think we catered for over 600 people, with plenty of leftovers for the following week.'

Connie has retired, and they now live at Maidens, Girvan.

*Haydn Higton*

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I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE

When I came to do my 'bit' for Fairtrade this year I found it all a bit strange. It was as if I had been here before. I know I was promoting Fairtrade in Annan and not Harpenden; and running a stall with goods coming from the One World shop in Carlisle, not the Fairdeal World Shop in Luton, but it was all so very familiar.

For years, I had run a monthly Fairtrade stall in the church in Harpenden whilst volunteering once a week at the Fairdeal shop in Luton. So, it was as if I had gone back in time.

However, I would like to thank everyone who supported the stall. There were only a few goods to return. I think we can safely say that Annan URC did choose to support Fairtrade on the 26th of February. In addition, the goods we bought came to over £100 – surely an excellent result.

Nan Maxwell



KNIT AND NATTER GROUP

This group, which started meeting in November 2015, now has fourteen members meeting most Tuesday mornings in our church hall. Anyone can join in the meetings, either to knit or even just to natter, and share fellowship round the table with some nice refreshments.

Many of you will recall that the group knitted over 1044 squares to create a complete christmas tree from them for our Christmas Tree Festival held in church at the beginning of December 2016. Have you ever wondered what happened to all those squares?

Now the group is busy making use of the squares for further recycling as blankets. One member is sewing some together for a relative to use, another is using some for a blanket to donate to the Canine Rescue Shop in town. However, the bulk of the squares are being sorted and packed for passing on to Commitment for Life. These will be used as activity, interest and fundraising at this year's Greenbelt Festival, on the Commitment for Life stall. Visitors will be invited to sit and spend a little time helping by stitching squares together into more blankets or knitting extra ones. The resulting useful completed blankets will then be shipped to supported countries.

The group is also now making more items for Greenbelt. These are knitted fruits for use in a treasure hunt being run by the Commitment for Life stall. This photo shows the initial sample batch of these intriguing items.



Margaret Blake

JAM JAR APPEAL

Home-made marmalade for sale is a regular favourite fundraiser at many events. Our faithful member Mamie is having trouble finding enough jars to use this year. Please see if you can give her any second-hand jam jars, complete with lids. If you can, please pass them to her at church.

Mamie Lamont

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## **COMMITMENT FOR LIFE REPORT**

### **General**

A group from the United Reformed Church will be visiting Christian Aid partners in May 2017.

### **ZIMBABWE**

#### **Programme successes**

A Gender Forum Network has been launched which brings together Bishops, all of whom signed up to commitment to a charter to work towards gender equality within their churches. As part of the network, Christian Aid is partnering with a male gender forum, Padare; a partner whose main drive is to strengthen the capacity of men and boys to become gender champions. So far, the GFN has developed a strategy with each church; to develop a gender policy and a gender sensitive liturgy. Christian Aid's programme also hosted the launch of the Southern Africa chapter of the Side By Side movement (<http://sidebysidegender.org/>), an international faith movement for gender justice, which brings together churches to work on gender and inequality.

#### **Increase in yields**

Yields have increased in dry regions in the past drought year as a result of climate smart interventions. A group of 240 women who grew sorghum in Binga harvested more than 60mt of sorghum. Another group in Binga harvested and sold organic herbs despite the drought experienced in Binga. The same group continue to reinvest their Fairtrade premiums in local community development initiatives. For example, they helped a local school in building class room blocks and purchasing school furniture. This is in addition to supporting some 50 orphans with school fees.

contd.

## **COMMITMENT FOR LIFE REPORT contd.**

### **Access to Capital for Rural Enterprises (ACRE) achievements**

With technical support brokered by CA, two private sector companies (Organic Africa and Bayoba) developed a business plan that has helped them secure investment. The two companies provide a secure and viable market for high value, climate resilient herbs and wild collections supplied by marginalised poor Communities. Growth of these two companies' business is set to impact on over 5,000 small-holder producers of small grains (sorghum, millet and sesame) and horticulture products, starting with high value gherkins.

### **Entrepreneurship for young people**

Silveira House has reached over 3,859 children and young adults and 13,867 other people indirectly, enabling them to be safer with greater opportunities to improve their skills and life prospects, including the ability to voice their views and opinions on issues that affect them. The skills include blacksmithing, carpentry and tailoring.

## **NICARAGUA**

Nicaragua has experienced ongoing corruption at the highest levels, including during its last elections held in November 2016. President Daniel Ortega won a third term in office, alongside his running mate, Rosario Murillo, who also happened to be his wife. The election went unchallenged in terms of there being no organised political opposition, however there was significant disenchantment and anger throughout the country, with many demonstrations against his re-election. To date, he remains unchallenged, but the Organisation of American States (OAS) has now requested an open dialogue with President Ortega and his regime, and in January 2017 the OAS presented an official report to the government, making recommendations to improve democracy and transparency over the next three years. Simultaneously, the EU Parliament has condemned Nicaragua's regime due to the prevalence of human rights abuses and political repression – most cases of which are related to the defence of natural resources and conflict linked to the development of large scale projects on inhabited land.

## **NEW US ADMINISTRATION**

Following the election of Mr Trump in the US, and his immigration policy, more controls are being put in place to avoid citizens from Central America entering the US. Many of the Central Americans that have been entering the US, have been escaping violence or climate change events that have hindered their attempts to pursue a secure livelihood, and live in safety. For example, many people have been fleeing significant drought and crop failure in Central America over the last year. Governments and UN authorities now believe that there is significant risk of a humanitarian crisis ensuing over the next year in Central America, especially in the so-called 'Dry Corridor' where the poorest population are located. In June 2016, it was noted that 3.5 million people were already in need of humanitarian assistance across Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, and this is only expected to get worse.

*Stories for Change from the URC*

## A STORY - - GOD AND THE GEESE

There was once a man who didn't believe in God and he didn't hesitate to let others know how he felt about religion and religious holidays. His wife, however, did believe, and she raised their children to have faith in God and Jesus, despite his disparaging comments.

One snowy evening, his wife was taking their children to a service in the farm community in which they lived. She asked her husband to come, but he refused as usual, "That story is nonsense!" he exclaimed. "Why would God lower Himself to come to Earth as a man? That's ridiculous!" So she and the children went, and he stayed home.

A while later, the winds grew stronger and the snow turned into a blizzard. As the man looked out the window, all he saw was a blinding snowstorm. He sat down to relax before the fire-place for the evening. Then he heard a loud thump. Something had hit the window. He looked out, but couldn't see more than a few feet.

When the storm let up a little, he ventured outside to see what could have been beating on his window. In the field near his house he saw a flock of wild geese. Apparently, they had been flying south for the winter when they were caught in the snowstorm and couldn't go on.

They were lost and stranded on his farm, with no food or shelter. They just flapped their wings and flew around the field in low circles, blindly and aimlessly. A couple of them had flown into his window, it seemed. The man felt sorry for the geese and wanted to help them.

The barn would be a great place for them to stay, he thought. It's warm and safe; surely they could spend the night and wait out the storm. So he walked over to the barn and opened the doors wide. Then he watched and waited, hoping they would notice the open barn and go inside. But the geese just fluttered around aimlessly and didn't seem to notice the barn or realize what it could mean for them.

The man tried to get their attention, but that just seemed to scare them, and they moved further away. He went into the house and came out with some bread, broke it up, and made a breadcrumb trail leading to the barn. They still didn't catch on. Now he was getting frustrated. He got behind them and tried to shoo them toward the barn, but they only got more scared and scattered in every direction except toward the barn.

Nothing he did could get them to go into the barn where they would be warm and safe. "Why don't they follow me?" he exclaimed. "Can't they see this is the only place where they can survive the storm?"

He thought for a moment and realized that they just wouldn't follow a human. "If only I were a goose, then I could save them," he said out loud. Then he had an idea. He went into the barn, got one of his own geese, and carried it in his arms as he circled around behind the flock of wild geese. He then released it. His goose flew through the flock and straight into the barn - one by one, the other geese followed it to safety.

He stood silently for a moment as the words he had spoken a few minutes earlier replayed in his mind: "If only I were a goose, then I could save them!" Then he thought about what he had said to his wife earlier: "Why would God want to be like us? That's ridiculous!"

*Suddenly it all made sense. That is what God had done. We were like the geese - blind, lost, perishing. God had His Son become like us so He could show us the way and save us.*

As the winds and blinding snow died down, his soul became quiet and pondered this wonderful thought. Suddenly he understood why Christ had come.

Years of doubt and disbelief vanished with the passing storm. He fell to his knees in the snow, and prayed his first prayer:

*"Thank You, God, for coming in human form to get me out of the storm."*

*Submitted by Margaret Blake*

## APRIL DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

|                         |                                                         |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Sun 2 <sup>nd</sup>     | Communion Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30 am         |
| Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup>     | Floral Art Group – 7:00 pm                              |
| Tue 4 <sup>th</sup>     | Knit & Natter – 10:00 am and every Tuesday              |
| Tue 4 <sup>th</sup>     | Games Afternoon – 2:00 pm and every Tuesday             |
| Fri 7 <sup>th</sup>     | ACT Fridays in Faith – 7:00 pm at The Hub, Ednam Street |
| Sun 9 <sup>th</sup>     | Morning Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30 am           |
| Mon 10 <sup>th</sup>    | Holy Week ACT Service @ St John's – 7:00 pm             |
| Tue 11 <sup>th</sup>    | Holy Week ACT Service @ Annan Old – 7:00 pm             |
| Wed 12 <sup>th</sup>    | Holy Week ACT Service @ St Columba's – 7:00 pm          |
| Thu 13 <sup>th</sup>    | Soup & Sweet Lunches – 11:30 am to 1:30 pm in the hall  |
| Thu 13 <sup>th</sup>    | Holy Week ACT Service @ URC – 7:00 pm Communion         |
| Fri 14 <sup>th</sup>    | Holy Week ACT Service @ St Andrew's – 7:00 pm           |
| Sun 16 <sup>th</sup>    | ACT Easter Morning Service – 8:00 am on the Motte       |
| Sun 16 <sup>th</sup>    | ACT joint breakfast – 9:00 am in URC hall               |
| Sun 16 <sup>th</sup>    | Easter Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30 am            |
| Tue 18 <sup>th</sup>    | Rainbow Tribe & Spectrum – 6:00 pm                      |
| Tue 18 <sup>th</sup>    | Annandale Churches Together meeting @ URC               |
| Thu 20 <sup>th</sup>    | Girls' Brigade – 6:00 pm                                |
| Sun 23 <sup>rd</sup>    | Morning Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30 am           |
| Tue 25 <sup>th</sup>    | Rainbow Tribe & Spectrum – 6:00 pm                      |
| Thu 27 <sup>th</sup>    | Girls' Brigade – 6:00 pm                                |
| Fri 28 <sup>th</sup>    | Friday Fellowship - 2:00 pm – Food Train                |
| Sun 30 <sup>th</sup>    | Morning Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30 am           |
|                         |                                                         |
| Mon 8 <sup>th</sup> May | Floral Art Group – 7:00 pm                              |

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 APRIL

| <b>Date</b>          | <b>Old Testament</b>      | <b>New Testament</b>     |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sat 1 <sup>st</sup>  | Ezra 1                    | 2 Corinthians 1.12-19    |
| Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | Joel 2.12-17              | 2 John                   |
| Tue 4 <sup>th</sup>  | Isaiah 58.1-14            | Mark 10.32-45            |
| Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Job 36.1-12               | John 14.1-14             |
| Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>  | Jeremiah 9.17-22          | Luke 13.31-35            |
| Fri 7 <sup>th</sup>  | Lamentations 5.1-3, 19-22 | John 12.20-26            |
| Sat 8 <sup>th</sup>  | Job 17.6-end              | John 12.27-36            |
| Mon 10 <sup>th</sup> | Lamentations 1.1-12a      | Luke 22.1-23             |
| Tue 11 <sup>th</sup> | Lamentations 2.10-18      | Luke 22.24-53 (or 39-53) |
| Wed 12 <sup>th</sup> | Jeremiah 11.18-20         | Luke 22.54-71            |
| Thu 13 <sup>th</sup> | Leviticus 16.2-24         | Luke 23.1-25             |
| Fri 14 <sup>th</sup> | Genesis 22.1-18           | John 19.38-end           |
| Sat 15 <sup>th</sup> | Hosea 6.1-6               | John 2.18-22             |
| Mon 17 <sup>th</sup> | Isaiah 54.1-14            | Romans 1.1-17            |
| Tue 18 <sup>th</sup> | Isaiah 51.1-11            | John 5.19-29             |
| Wed 19 <sup>th</sup> | Isaiah 26.1-19            | John 20.1-10             |
| Thu 20 <sup>th</sup> | Isaiah 43.14-21           | Revelation 1.4-end       |
| Fri 21 <sup>st</sup> | Isaiah 42.10-17           | 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11   |
| Sat 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Job 14.1-14               | John 21.1-14             |
| Mon 24 <sup>th</sup> | Ezekiel 1.22-end          | Revelation 4             |
| Tue 25 <sup>th</sup> | Proverbs 8.1-11           | Acts 16.6-15             |
| Wed 26 <sup>th</sup> | Hosea 5.15-6.6            | 1 Corinthians 15.1-11    |
| Thu 27 <sup>th</sup> | Jonah 2                   | Mark 4.35-end            |
| Fri 28 <sup>th</sup> | Genesis 6.9-end           | 1 Peter 3.8-end          |
| Sat 29 <sup>th</sup> | 1 Samuel 2.1-8            | Matthew 28.8-15          |
|                      |                           |                          |