

Annan United Reformed Church

www.annanurc.org.uk



May 2017 Newsletter



MAY WORSHIP AT ANNAN URC

Sunday 7th May:

Rev Kate Vivers – Communion Service

Prayer Leader:

D Maxwell

Bible Readings:

R Mitchell

J Pool

Sunday 14th May:

Joseph Kidd-Bentley

Prayer Leader:

J Murray

Bible Readings:

John 14: 1-14

E Woodman

1 Peter 2: 2-10

H Higton

Sunday 21st May:

Mary Mulligan – Christian Aid

Prayer Leader:

C McCreadie

Bible Readings:

M Jones

H McNairn

Sunday 28th May:

Sue Jackson

Prayer Leader:

R Mitchell

Bible Readings:

M Lamont

M Kerr

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.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

Those who supported the Service in our church in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity may remember Rev David Pickering, our Synod Moderator, took the theme 'Crossing Barriers'. Annan Churches Together are continuing to explore this topic, and there is a meeting to which everyone is invited on Saturday June 24th from 10.00 am till 12 noon at St Andrews Church.

The meeting is open to all to suggest how our words and actions can make Jesus known in our community. Rev John Pickles has circulated a draft document, and if you wish to have a copy, see Haydn Higton.

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## HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB

This event will run from 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July at Hecklegirth School, and it is for boys and girls of primary school age. There are games, crafts, singing and many activities from 10.00 am till 12 noon. If you have children or grandchildren, see Helen McNairn or Marion Kerr or Lyn Higton about enrolling the youngsters for the week.

Everyone should note in their diaries – the Sunday Service is on July 30<sup>th</sup> at 11.15 am in Hecklegirth School – come and enjoy seeing youngsters delighting in worship and praise.

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SHOEBOX APPEAL

Each year we contribute boxes in November to ensure that deprived youngsters in poor countries have a gift to show that our love is for them. Will you fill a shoebox or two this year?

Boxes can be taken from the Church Meeting on 11th June, and thereafter from the church vestibule.

Let's aim to send 100 boxes this year!



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

14 to 20 MAY 2017

Just as Christian Aid itself had its origins 70 years ago in the need to alleviate the refugee crisis in Europe after the Second World War, so Christian Aid Week was born 60 years ago out of the same compelling need to help the world's displaced.

The first Christian Aid Week, in May 1957, raised £26,000 from the 316 towns and areas that took part. The 2016 event last year raised more than £10 million.



On Sunday 14th May (the start of Christian Aid Week) the annual United Service will be held in St. Andrew's Parish Church, Annan, commencing at 6.30 pm.

The Christian Aid committee are pleased that Mrs. Mary Mulligan (Churches Development Officer for Christian Aid) is coming from Edinburgh to lead this service. Mrs. Mary Mulligan has a wealth of experience as a full-time worker for Christian Aid and as a consequence this service will prove to be most helpful, interesting and challenging regarding the important role that Christian Aid plays throughout the world.

We hope that as many as possible will be able to attend this important service.

Your prayerful support for the work of Christian Aid is much appreciated throughout the year and especially during the special collections that take place during Christian Aid Week. There will be an opportunity to give your financial support at the united church service or collections at Tesco's on 19th May and on the High Street on 20th May. If you can offer your support as a collector, please speak to Marion Kerr or Jim Murray.

J. Murray

Chairman - ACT Christian Aid Committee

FRIDAY FELLOWSHIP

On Friday 17th March, fellowship members had an enjoyable afternoon when they held their Daffodil Tea. Friends from the other churches in the town joined with us on this occasion. The entertainment was provided by members of the Annava Choir, who delighted everyone with a selection of songs from the musicals, and also Scottish songs. Mrs Heather Purves, a member of the choir, gave a very amusing recitation of "How Jake lost his wife" (off the back of a motorbike). As a result of the collection taken, and sales of cakes, we were able to send £130 to Alzheimers Scotland – which is the United Reformed Church Women's Union project for the year.

For our April meeting, we are having Susan Shillingford from the Food Train to speak to us.

In May we have our annual general meeting, when members will draw up a syllabus of speakers for our next session, which will commence in September 2017. There will also be a bring and buy sale at that May meeting, in support of the Women's Union Project.

Marion Kerr

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## WILD FLOWERS AT RISK

As you are aware from television and newspapers, concern has been expressed regarding declining numbers of bluebells to be seen around the countryside and woodland areas. The following words, I feel, are appropriate to the situation.

### NOT FOR YOU

Let the Bluebell ring, and swing upon its sturdy stem.

Let them blow beneath the trees, just where God planted them.

Let them live!

... and give to all who love the countryside-  
the joy of walking in the woodlands - when the earth is dyed,  
in lovely hues of heavenly blues – flower-carpets bright and thick.

... Leave them please, just where they are  
They're NOT FOR YOU TO PICK.

*Church Gardener*

## **CAN YOU HELP?**

Volunteers are required to help the caring, sharing work of Kate's Kitchen to continue. This venture began as part of the outreach of the churches in Annan, and now serves not only many meals but also as a resource where people are helped to take control of their own lives – to become responsible citizens.

You could help in a variety of ways – from washing up, to helping with the programmes organised, or advising from your own experiences, etc. Their premises are at "The Beacon" on Bank Street in the centre of Annan.

The Annan Food Bank is located at "The Beacon" too, and everyone is urged to donate tins, dried food and so on to contribute towards the food parcels that some people in Annan have to rely on to feed themselves at difficult times. Items can be left in the box in the church vestibule.

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ORGAN RECITAL

St George's United Reformed Church at West Walls in Carlisle have organised an organ recital by Stuart Stokell on Saturday 20th May 2017 at 2.00 pm.

Tickets costing £5.00 are available from that church's social & fundraising committee members or by contacting Elizabeth MacKenzie on 01228 521907.



COMMITMENT FOR LIFE REPORT

BANGLADESH

It would be easy to assume that Morsheda Begum had given up imagining that things would get better in her life. Born in northern Bangladesh, Morsheda was just eight years old when she was married. She now lives alone. With no assets and four children to care for, Morsheda was forced to make a daily three-hour journey to the fields where she earned as little as 74 pence a day harvesting chillis, or digging and carrying earth from the river.

Over the years Morsheda has been flooded out of her home several times. Living on a char (islands created by the constantly moving coastlines of Bangladesh) means that life is precarious. Owing to an everchanging climate and natural tides, communities are faced with the constant threat of flooding. Once, when the floods came, Morsheda bundled up her then young daughter in a cooking pot and floated her down the river to safety. Each time her home flooded, she was reliant on her neighbours for sanctuary.

Christian Aid first visited Morsheda in 2015. Back then she lived with the constant threat of flooding. 'I get scared here when there is heavy rain and a strong wind. When the river rises, I get frightened', she told us.

'This house is very low. If I could raise my house, then I would feel much safer living here with my children. I feel very scared of the river. When I look at it I think 'it is coming'; it reminds me of everything that has happened. I am hopeful. I am confident that one day I can change my life. I know how to survive the disasters. I have what I need for the difficult days, but I am hopeful that there will be better days.'

In the summer of 2015, just weeks after they first met Morsheda, her home was once again flooded. As before, she and her children were offered shelter by her neighbour, but they lived without any sense of safety for their futures. With support from partner GUK, Morsheda's home was moved to higher ground. After the move, the land on which her old home stood was submerged under river water when the next floods came. Morsheda rebuilt her home with help from the community. She and her family also now have a latrine and have been supported with livestock. When asked by our partner how it feels to be safe, Morsheda said:

'Last year when you came to my house we were knee deep in water. Today, despite the flooding, we are standing in a dry place. Last time I had to take shelter in my neighbour's house. Now I am much safer'.

COMMITMENT FOR LIFE REPORT contd.

ZIMBABWE

Christian Aid regional co-ordinator for the Isle of Man, Louise Whitelegg, travelled across Zimbabwe in December on a self-funded trip to see for herself several of the projects funded by the charity and the Manx government's International Development Committee. Here she tells a little of the story of the Tonga people.

Traditionally the Tonga people were settled along the banks of the Kariba River surviving on the fertile soil as subsistence farmers. In 1958, the river was dammed so, consequently, the Tonga people lost their traditional homes and were forced to migrate. Many left the area but others were forced to move north, further inland. Families were given plots of land, an acre for a homestead and a couple of acres for their farms. Their homes consist of small round mud huts with thatched roofs. The area is extremely arid. It currently takes 40 minutes of pumping the well to raise water, and after two years of drought all the river beds are dry. Levels of poverty are grave.

Infrastructure is virtually non-existent and standards of education are far below an acceptable level. With a population of an estimated 200,000 people there are 80 primary school and 40 secondary schools. The whole area currently receives grain and seed from the World Food Programme and the Zimbabwe government's food aid programme. In Binga, as the families have been allocated their land, there are no villages as such. So families face 5-40km journeys on foot to the nearest shop/school/clinic.

Binga has an estimated 6,400 children and young people with multiple disabilities including cerebal palsy and speech and language impairments. They are usually unable to manage their daily lives independently and have no exposure to formal learning, lack relevant health education and encounter stigma and lack of understanding.

Getting general medical assistance is difficult too in an area with such high poverty. Bhekimpilo, an 11-year-old child broke his leg playing football, which is such a normal thing for a child his age to do. But as there was no way to get him any medical attention he developed sepsis. Although the leg eventually healed naturally, it left him with severe trouble walking.

Christian Aid's partner has been working with children with disabilities for the last two years on a Comic Relief-funded project. Children, with disabilities, were often hidden from view as many believed that witchcraft and curses were the cause of the child's ailment. Working with the Christian Aid partner has broken down many of these stigmas and encouraged integration. Louise had many interesting conversations with the parents and asked what their hopes were for the future.

"It is not only one of the most impoverished places I have ever seen, but also the most socially isolated. But I did not see apathy or despair. I saw grit and determination in the most desperate of circumstances."

MAY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tue 2 nd	Knit & Natter – 10:00 am and every Tuesday
Tue 2 nd	Games Afternoon – 2:00 pm and every Tuesday
Tues 2 nd	Rainbow Tribe & Spectrum – 6:00 pm and every Tuesday
Thu 4 th	Girls' Brigade – 6:00 pm and every Thursday
Sun 7 th	Communion Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30 am
Mon 8 th	Floral Art Group – 7:00 pm
Thu 11 th	Spring Lunches – 11:30 am to 1:30 pm in the hall
Sun 14 th	Morning Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30 am
14 th to 20 th	Christian Aid Week
Sun 14 th	United Christian Aid Service – 6:30 pm at St Andrew's Church
Sat 19 th	Christian Aid collection at Tesco Annan
Sat 20 th	Christian Aid collection on Annan High Street
Sat 20 th	Organ Recital at West Walls, Carlisle – 2:00 pm
Sun 21 st	Morning Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30 am
Tue 23 rd	Last date for June Newsletter items
Fri 26 th	Friday Fellowship - 2:00 pm – Annual Meeting with Bring and Buy
Sun 28 th	Morning Service and Sunday Seekers – 10:30 am

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 MAY

Date	Old Testament	New Testament
Mon 1 st	Exodus 24.1-11	Revelation 5
Tue 2 nd	Leviticus 19.9-18, 32-end	Matthew 5.38-end
Wed 3 rd	Genesis 3.8-21	1 Corinthians 15.12-28
Thu 4 th	Isaiah 33.13-22	Mark 6.47-end
Fri 5 th	Nehemiah 9.6-17	Romans 5.12-end
Sat 6 th	Isaiah 61.10-62.5	Luke 24.1-12
Mon 8 th	Jeremiah 31.10-17	Revelation 7.9-end
Tue 9 th	Job 31.13-23	Matthew 7.1-12
Wed 10 th	Genesis 2.4b-9	1 Corinthians 15.35-49
Thu 11 th	Proverbs 28.3-end	Mark 10.17-31
Fri 12 th	Ecclesiastes 12.1-8	Romans 6.1-11
Sat 13 th	1 Chronicles 29.10-13	Luke 24.13-35
Mon 15 th	Genesis 15.1-18	Romans 4.13-end
Tue 16 th	Deuteronomy 8.1-10	Matthew 6.19-end
Wed 17 th	Hosea 13.4-14	1 Corinthians 15.50-end
Thu 18 th	Exodus 3.1-15	Mark 12.18-27
Fri 19 th	Ezekiel 36.33-end	Romans 8.1-11
Sat 20 th	Isaiah 38.9-20	Luke 24.33-end
Mon 22 nd	Proverbs 4.1-13	Philippians 2.1-11
Tue 23 rd	Isaiah 32.12-end	Romans 5.1-11
Wed 24 th	Isaiah 43.1-13	Titus 2.11-3.8
Thu 25 th	2 Kings 2.1-15	Mark 16.14-20
Fri 26 th	Exodus 35.30-36.1	Galatians 5.13-end
Sat 27 th	Numbers 11.16-17, 24-29	1 Corinthians 2
Mon 29 th	Numbers 27.15-end	1 Corinthians 3
Tue 30 th	1 Samuel 10.1-10	1 Corinthians 12.1-13
Wed 31 st	1 Kings 19.1-18	Matthew 3.13-end