

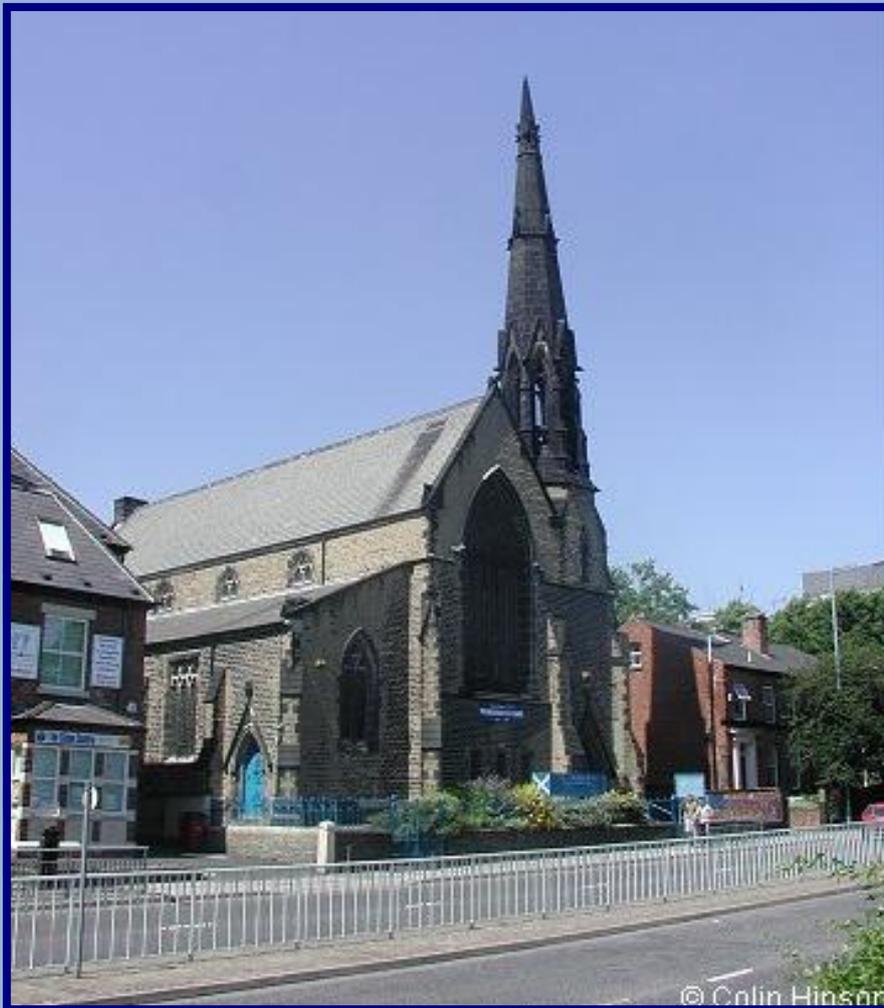
ST. ANDREWS UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Upper Hanover Street, Sheffield, S3 7RQ

MESSENGER

Price £1.25

November 2018



Church Secretary	Elizabeth Draper, 52 Highcliffe Drive, S11 7LU (230 7252)
F.W.O Secretary	Wilma Love, 29 Cavendish Ave., S17 3N (235 0382)
Chairman Management Team:	Prof Ian Cooke, 80 Grove Road, S7 2GZ (262 0718)
Treasurer	Elizabeth Cousley,
Organist & Choirmaster	Douglas Jones GGSM(Lond) PG CE, 96 Southey Hall Road, S5 7PY (257 6630)
Messenger Editors	Ann Cathels, email cathels@cathelsann5.orangehome.co.uk, Elizabeth Draper, email elizdraper504@btinternet.com Paula Higgins email paula@buzzsheffield.co.uk
Webmaster	Callum Groeger, groegercesg@gmail.com
Website: http://www.standrewsurcsheffield.org.uk	
Buzz at St. Andrews Child Contact Centre Coordinator 07905417228	

Calendar for November 2018

Sun	28	Oct	10.45am	Very Revd Peter Bradley
Tues	30	Oct		NO Community Choir
Sun	4	Nov	10.45am	Prof Clyde Binfield
Tues	6	Nov	10 – 12	Community Choir
Sun	11	Nov	10.45am	Revd David Stec - Remembrance
Tues	13	Nov	10 – 12	Community Choir
Wed	14	Nov	2pm	Study Group (3) - 36 Norfolk Road
Sun	18	Nov	10.45am	St Mark's clergy
Tues	20	Nov	10 – 12	Community Choir
Wed	21	Nov	2pm	Study Group (4) - 60 Bradway Road
Sun	25	Nov	10.45am	Revd Fleur Houston – St Andrew's Day
Tues	27	Nov	10 – 12	Community Choir
Fri	30	Nov	6.30 for 7pm	In:spire concert
Sun	2	Nov	10.45am	Revd David Stec - Advent Communion

Rotas

Creche

OCT	28	Isabel Sandland
NOV	4	Barbara Macmillan
	11	Shelagh Beach
	18	Jean Dickson
	25	Wilma Love
DEC	2	Isabel Sandland

Coffee

OCT	28	Shelagh Beach
NOV	4	Barbara Macmillan
	11	Shelagh Beach
	18	Jean Dickson
	25	Kathleen Smyth
DEC	2	

Flowers

OCT	28	Dorothy Adam
NOV	4	Barbara Macmillan
	11	Elizabeth Draper
	18	Jean Dickson
	25	
DEC	2	

Please sign up on the rotas on the board² in the hall when you can help. Talk to Jean Dickson who is in charge of Flowers and Kathleen Smyth who is in charge of Coffee.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our **Autumn Study groups** are looking at 'Christmas: Ancient Meanings, Modern Faith' under the informed leadership of the Revd Adrian Alker. The first two have been stimulating discussions and it's not too late to join in the rest:

Wednesday **14 November at 36 Norfolk Road** and

Wednesday **21 November at 60 Bradway Road**, both at **2pm**.

We are also invited to join the Advent discussions at the **Beacon at Broomhill**. They will take place on **5 Thursdays, 12.15 - 1.30pm, starting on 22 November**, and will be looking at 'Women in the Bible'. All are welcome.

Music to Inspire ! Annabelle Lawson has secured a fascinating variety of musicians for the next series of twilight recitals, beginning with Naomi Atherton (French horn) on **Friday 30 November, 6.30 for 7pm**. Naomi, who is Ensemble 360's French horn player, is joined by pianist Annabelle in a programme which will include works by Franz and Richard Strauss, as well as Paul Dukas and others.

These concerts are proving to be a delight, sometimes introducing less familiar music, and the opportunity to talk with the performers afterwards over refreshments. All are welcome - Bring your friends.

Dates for your new diaries! The rest of the season in 2019 is:

- 18th January - Zivorad Nikolic (classical accordion)
- 15th February - Lawson Trio (piano, violin, cello)
- 22nd March - Tom McKinney (guitar)
- 26th April - Sheffield Young Singers
- 7th June - Rakhi Singh (& Annabelle) (violin)

Roundabout, the youth housing charity, is holding a sponsored Sleep Out on **Friday 9 November** at 92 Burton Road (in Kelham Island). They are asking participants to raise £150 each to help end youth homelessness. (£150 could buy a Home Starter pack for a young person when they move into their own tenancy.) If you know of anyone who is doing this sleep-out, please support them.

The **Islamic Society of Britain** invites us to a special evening to mark Interfaith Week 2018, where different faiths come together to discuss "the questions still left unanswered". This Interfaith Event will take place on **Tuesday 20 November, 6 - 8 pm at St Andrew's, Psalter Lane, S11 8YL**.

CORRECTION: Walter Houston, whose election as President of the Society for Old Testament Study we noted in the last issue, has asked us to clarify that Presidents of SOTS are elected 18 months in advance to serve for one calendar year only. That means that he is not the next President, but the next but one, and his term will begin on 1 January 2020 and end on 31 December of the same year.

SHOEBOXES: *Reminder from Sheila Dunstan*

We are getting close to the time of the shoebox appeal. I have not yet had the leaflets but the type of contents will be the same as previous years. Perhaps you would like to start collecting when you are out shopping. On the list – soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, facecloth, stationary, small toys, jewellery, hats, gloves , scarves, comb and hairbrush. All these need to be of a size to fit in the shoe box. I will get the leaflets to you as soon as I get them and the closing date which is usually early December.

I have shoe boxes you can cover or a few self assembly ones. Thank you for your help in this appeal. Every box is appreciated by the recipient who may have had very few toys etc. One little boy was heard to say “Oh good some soap. That will save my Mum having to buy it.” Not often boys love soap !

I will put out a box for anyone who wishes to donate but does not want to make up a box.

LOOKING BACK

Music in the Round gave one of their lunch-time concerts in St Andrew’s on 27 September, to an audience of around 100. The string trio of Claudia Ajmone and Benjamin Nabarro (violins) and Ruth Gibson (viola) played Serenade Opus 12 by Zoltan Kodaly and Terzetto in C Opus 74 by Anton Dvorak - a delightful programme beautifully played. This was a first for MitR and they were very pleased with the venue and the acoustics - and we hope they will come again. To live up to their name, all the chairs were re-arranged in circular form - a massive job done most efficiently and neatly

Tom
- and
church



by their
manager
Mckinney
the
looked
splendid !

PEACE SERVICE

On 30th September, the Worship Group led the service, on the theme of Peace. The readings were Ephesians 2: 13-22; Colossians 3: 8-17 and John 14: 1 and 21-27. The hymns were 'For the healing of the nations', 'We pray for peace', 'I joyed when to the House of God' (verses from Psalms 122 and 133), 'Make me a channel of your peace' and 'God of freedom, God of justice'.

Elizabeth's Comment:

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife,
Throughout the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

That was written by Thomas Osbert Mordaunt during the Seven Years' War in the middle of the 18th century - and it was quoted by Sir Walter Scott as a chapter heading in his novel 'Old Mortality'. The whole poem is an appeal to a young man to leave his wife and child and domestic comforts to do his duty as a soldier, and it depicts civilian life as dull, unheroic, soft, even shameful.

It may seem odd to begin a comment in a service about peace by speaking of war. But can the two be separated? And why is peace so difficult to achieve and to maintain? What is peace?
Jesus tells us to be peace-makers - How do we do that?

You may have listened to this year's Reith lectures on Radio 4, by the Canadian historian Margaret Macmillan. She examined our complex relationship with war, and wondered whether war was an essential part of being human. Let's admit it: We often do admire the military virtues; we support conflict when we consider it to be justified; military action is exciting, especially to young people; in times of war, people may find a purpose and a role which may otherwise have been lacking in their lives

But peace is more than just the absence of conflict. Qualities such as courage, self-sacrifice, endurance of suffering - are all found in civilian life as well as on the battlefield - albeit in different spheres and responding to different challenges.

The challenges we face in peace, the problems, the issues to be addressed, are maybe less dramatic but just as troubling as those of wartime - and they are often deep-rooted and intractable. They are enemies of a different kind to be fought. Think of the Beveridge Report of 1942 - written in the throes of a world war, but looking forward to better times, when five "Giant Evils" in society would be remedied. Those five evils, or enemies, were thought at that time to be squalor, ignorance, want, idleness (ie unemployment), and disease. And the post-war social security system and the National Health Service were set up to tackle them. Peace in 1945 was a positive opportunity to reform, renew and repair - to make things better. And not just in our own country, but throughout the world.

Sadly, those same evils have not been completely conquered and eradicated, and others have arisen too. We might add now as a new enemy, destruction of the planet by climate change. So peace is not a time to be idle and self-indulgent, but a time to put talents and energy and creativity into new channels. Because there will always be evils to fight and conflicts to deal with - waiting for someone - waiting for us ? - to confront them.

What else can peace mean ?

There are hundreds of references to peace in the Bible (one source says 429 in KJV) and they show that the Hebrew word *shalom* means not just absence of war or conflict but much more. (I am indebted to David Stec for his entry in the Hebrew dictionary.) *Shalom* conveys an inward sense of wholeness or completeness; a sense of safety and security that brings tranquillity of mind.

Well-being - of an individual or of society. Harmony with others. Reconciliation that ends conflict. These meanings do not suggest a flat and empty kind of peace; they convey purpose and confidence, trust and effort.

(In Islam too, the word *salaam*, from the same root, means being in harmony, in a right relationship, with God and your fellow beings and the world.) So we can experience this kind of peace even in times of trouble, conflict, distress. This is the meaning in the Aaronic blessing - which we know and love - "The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace". Israel at that point is about to go and conquer the Promised Land - so 'peace' in that blessing is not the absence of war. It means an inner peace based on knowing that whatever happened, they were under God's protection.

And when people bravely endure long imprisonment, or torture, or pain, or disastrous life circumstances - this is the inner peace that sustains them and gives them courage.

Isaiah said, 'You (God) keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.' So our trust in God is an important factor. But we don't earn this peace - it is a gift, a blessing. Jesus said, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.' But then he goes on, 'Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.' This is the peace that is way beyond our human understanding. And it needs our trust in God's guidance to find it.

Jesus also said, 'Blessed are the peacemakers'. Judith is going to speak about peace-making.

Judith's Comment:

When I agreed to contribute a comment on Achieving Peace for today's service I knew I had set myself a challenge. If I had the answer to achieving peace I would be ruling the world by now and it would be a very different place - as I'm sure it would be if any of us had the answer to achieving peace. On a global scale peace would mean the absence of war, both civil war and war between nations. Imagine - no more bombs, no more invasions of towns and villages, no more terrorism and extreme ideologies, no more fear, no more displaced people fleeing for their lives.

Throughout history people have fought wars but have also sought to achieve peace through a number of means; political marriages; building walls; diplomacy and treaties. The League of Nations was established in 1919 to bring stability to the world and ensure that war never broke out again. Should a dispute arise between nations a resolution would be sought through discussion and if that failed, by economic sanctions would be imposed. Some years after the end of WW1, 'the War to end all wars,' there was a growing concern that it would be followed by an even worse war. On Armistice Day 1933 white Poppies for Peace first appeared, the symbol of the Peace Pledge Union. I am aware that the Peace Pledge Union is controversial. The white poppy can be associated with those who refuse to fight for their country; and indeed some of the movement's literature has a particular and critical view of the nature and purpose of Remembrance services.

But the movement also stands for something important; the vision of a world where conflict can be resolved without violence and with justice and the commitment to achieving that vision.

In 1945 the League of Nations was succeeded by the United Nations. One of its aims was and still is 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to develop friendly relations among countries.' In 1981 the United Nations resolved that each year, September 21st. would be observed around the world as The International Day of Peace. All groups and nations at war would cease hostilities for a day (but I have to agree with David Stec's observation that this is unlikely to happen just because the UN says 'stop fighting.'). More achievably, people all over the world would come together to commit to peace, to talk, play and eat together, to get to know and appreciate each other, creating understanding and tolerance.

Yet, despite all these aims and visions there is still war and conflict— but perhaps less than there would be without them those aims. What can we do? We as individuals can only work on a small scale but many small scale actions add up. By coming together as just described but not only on September 21st, can we give a clear message to leaders and politicians around the world that people do not want war? Can we use our voices, our votes, our campaigns, our charity donations to bring about a fairer sharing of wealth and resources? With peace go the concepts of wellbeing, justice and equity. There is a very real fear that future wars will be sparked by scarcity of or rather unequal access to water, food and fuel.

To my mind the hardest conflicts and wars to prevent and the terrible atrocities associated with them are those arising from mind-sets moulded by extreme ideologies and the lust for power. It is easy to feel helpless and powerless in the face of such evils. But we can, of course, pray; pray for peace; pray for those who negotiate peace; pray that the mind- sets of those who initiate war, conflict and terrorism may be changed. Samuel Kobia, a past general Secretary of the World Council of Churches, wrote 'when the world is at war in so many places and the forces of violence, war and oppression seem to be increasing, praying for peace may seem to be a futile exercise. But we Christians believe both in the power of peace and the power of prayer.'

What about peace closer to home, in our own circles and families? A recent documentary on Radio 4 revealed that there is ⁷ conflict and estrangement in one in five families. Several people interviewed acknowledged that arguments and resentment

over wills and inheritance and a sense of being unfairly treated were at the root of the problem; others, however, admitted that it had all started from a misunderstanding or offence taken at someone's words or behaviour. Sadly, some people had concluded that the rift was beyond repair and that the only way to get their own life back on track was to sever contact with the other party. No-one wants to be on the receiving end of hurtful words and it is all too easy to speak in haste. Words can't be unsaid despite the phrase 'I take back what I said.' What can we do? Can we think before we speak? Can we avoid taking offence so badly that we clam up instead of challenging what has been said in a way which enables a constructive conversation? Not easy, but surely it is possible.

But then will come perhaps the hardest challenge of all – the willingness by both sides to draw a line and move on. This year I had the pleasure and privilege once again of singing at graduation ceremonies in Lincoln. The ceremonies in the Cathedral were joyous celebrations, but later in the day the new graduates and their families were invited to attend a reflective service in the University Chapel. That service gave people attending much to think about – how the graduates had changed during their years at university; that the experience may not have been entirely positive; that the future would present challenges and difficulties as well as opportunities. But there was one line particularly in the final blessing which struck me as wise advice and a challenge: Make peace with the past.

David's Comment

Jesus leaves us with a very special gift, the gift of peace. He expresses this emphatically, by putting the word "peace" first: "Peace I leave with you". And it is not just any kind of peace, but specifically *his* peace, as he adds, "my peace I give to you"; and again in the Greek, the word for "peace" is the first word in the clause.

Jesus gives us his peace in his teaching, in which he always proclaimed a message of the importance of loving one's neighbour and showing respect to all. He also gives us his peace in the example which he himself set throughout his life, practising the message which he preached, and never responding to hostility and opposition in like terms.

But *his* peace is also much more than this; it is a very special kind of peace, and indeed it is unique: "not as the world gives do I give to you". It is a peace which only he can give, a peace which can be found only in him as the son of God. It is a peace founded upon his victory over the sin and death in which all humans share.

John 14 is part of a long speech which Jesus gave to his disciples on the eve of Passover, just before his crucifixion. He is about to depart in death, but will return as the risen and glorified Lord. So he can repeat the words of comfort with which he opened Chapter 14: "Let not your hearts be troubled" and he can now add: "neither let them be afraid". 8

When we place our faith in him, because of his resurrection and exaltation, we obtain a peace which we can find nowhere else and in no other person. He also puts it like this in John 16:33: "I have said this to you, that you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

--- 0 --- 0 --- 0 ---

NEWSLETTER

Paul Blomfield MP held a **Drop-In Café** in our hall on Friday 28 September, as part of his annual Big Conversations to find out the real concerns and interests of his constituents. Turn-out by the public was disappointing but St Andrew's members made the most of the opportunity to discuss local issues and how to take forward their concerns, such as parking at the Northern General Hospital.

Paul's October newsletter reports on the main issues raised in these Big Conversations. This year the dominant themes were **crime and policing, health and social care, Brexit and transport**. Other significant issues included **social security, homelessness and rough sleeping** and a range of issues relating to **schools**. The question of funding lay under many of them. These will be his priorities in the coming parliamentary year and he promises a report next April to show what he has done.

--- 0 --- 0 --- 0 ---

LECTIONARY READINGS for NOVEMBER

- 28 October Jeremiah **31**: 7-9; Psalm **126**;
Hebrews **7**: 23-28; Mark **10**: 46-52
- 4 November Deuteronomy **6**: 1-9; Psalm **119**: 1-8;
Hebrews **9**: 11-14; Mark **12**: 28-34
- 11 November 1 Kings **17**: 8-16; Psalm **146**;
Hebrews **9**: 24-28; Mark **12**: 38-44
- 18 November Daniel **12**: 1-3; Psalm **16**;
Hebrews **10**: 11-14, (15-18), 19-25; Mark **13**: 1-8
- 25 November Daniel **7**: 9-10, 13-14; Psalm **93**;
Revelation **1**: 4b-8; John **18**: 33-37

--- 0 --- 90 --- 0 ---

FAMILY NEWS

The sun is shining . . . and long may it continue! The announcement on Sunday 21st that the clocks will go back the next weekend came as a surprise . . . although the pre-Advent groups are up and running, so I should have been aware that summer must be over.

One of the items in the announcements was that **Bill Armstrong** is now, after a fall that took him for a brief time to hospital, home in Loxley Park, room 70, and would be glad to have visitors. **Wilma Love** continues to improve, although the driving ban curtails her activities. **Dorothy Adam** is in hospital being treated for cellulitis. **Fraser McVittie** is coping philosophically with his changed life style, but **Anita** has constant pain from the repair to her broken hip.

Sadie Jones had a nasty fall in the street going home from church a few Sundays ago; she suffered cuts to her face and damage to her shoulder, which has been very painful. Further investigations are being done to find out what caused the fall. She is very grateful for the kindness of strangers at the time but misses church and sends her love.

Isabel Winning is very settled and content in Ash House; she is visited regularly by Raymond and Kathleen Smyth, and David Stec has taken communion to her. Her daughter comes up one day every week. We remember all those absent friends in the family prayers.

We celebrated **Stuart Haxton's** 60th birthday with cake and a toast, and Douglas again gathered the celebration together with an old familiar tune . . . thanks, Douglas! **Elizabeth Cousley** is back after another travel to a faraway place . . . Uzbekistan this time . . . We used to have evenings in the church hall when we would be transported to those realms with slides and a talk - the BBC hardly held a candle to the talent in the church!

Ann Cathels

SYNOD REPORT

1. Yorkshire Synod, like the URC as a whole, is looking at how best to support the local churches in these times of fewer ministers and mostly aging congregations. They are looking at ways to reduce time, effort and expense - for instance, to use video communication for conferencing (to save travel); for supplying worship resources; for training ministers and lay people; and to publicise good mission work in individual churches.
2. To this end, Yorkshire Synod will launch a YouTube channel on 9 December (also Facebook and Instagram) with resources for worship, and churches are invited to send in all sorts of ideas and materials.
3. The five Northerly Synods in particular are looking at ways to share resources. The current mantra is: 'Do less and do it well'.

4. The roles of Synod Clerk, Synod Treasurer and Trust & Property Secretary, which will all become vacant in the next two years, are being reviewed.

5. The two Children & Young People Development Practitioner posts, originally for two year contracts, have been made permanent in recognition of the excellent work done by the post holders, Stephanie and Megan.

6. The criteria for applications to the Synod Mission Fund is to be broadened to allow greater flexibility of applications, and Synod is encouraging churches to use its resources. The basic aim of the Mission Fund is to enable churches to engage in Mission Projects that they would not otherwise be able to undertake from their own resources - and to engage with people rather than adapt premises, and have a clear mission aim and a well researched plan. The Fund should be available to all recognised church groups - without attempting to define closely what a 'church group' is. The upper limit for large grants remains at £100,000, but the limit for smaller grants will be increased from £1,000 to £2,500, and the restriction lifted on only one application (large or small) per church per calendar year.

7. A very positive report was given on the Manor Project in Sheffield. This is an ecumenical initiative to create change in churches and community by engaging churches in community, led by a URC Church Related Community Worker. The many activities include the S2 Food Poverty Network; a Credit Union, helping people with Universal Credit; and a Food Club where people pay £2.50 per week and can take £25-30 worth of goods.

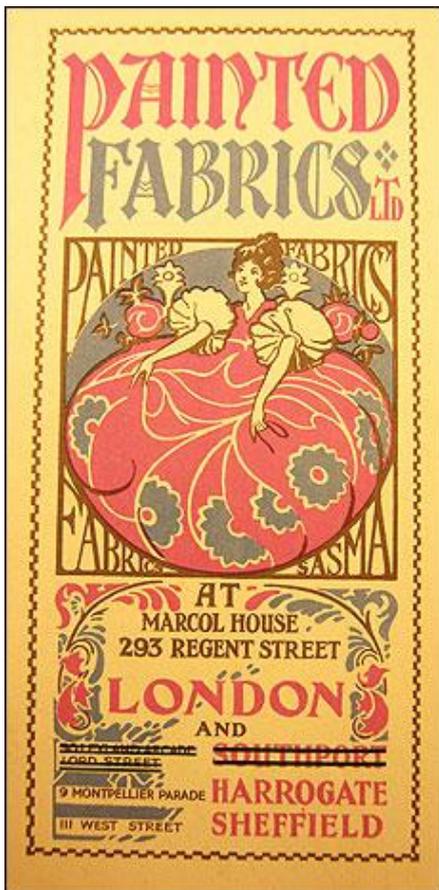
At this time of Remembrance . . .

PAINTED FABRICS WORKSHOP

In 1915 Annie Bindon Carter, who had graduated in art from Sheffield School of Art, was a volunteer at Wharnccliffe ...which was used as a military hospital. One day, helping a severely depressed amputee soldier who felt that he had no future in any employment, she strapped a paintbrush on to his stump of an arm and showed him how to stencil one of her designs on to fabric; the amazing improvement in his well-being encouraged her, with other graduate volunteers, to extend their involvement. She eventually rented a piece of ground at Meadowhead and used ex-army huts there to use as workshops; she paired men, one with a right arm and one with a left... to work as pairs on sewing machines making cushions, curtains, dresses etc. from stencilled materials.

From the very first sale of their work at Wharncliffe in 1915, their products were sold in London by Liberty and Claridges. The Princess Mary became their patron, and opened the workshops at Meadowhead in 1925.

There is a wealth of information on Google, and it is gratifying to learn there that this inspired voluntary enterprise has been awarded a grant of £98,000 to extend research into its history.



Ann Cathels



Former Army huts at Norton Woodseats



Princess Mary with a disabled soldier



CHURCH MEETING 30 September

1. General Data Protection Regulation

The main item at this C M was a PowerPoint presentation by Ian Cooke on GDPR, the new rules which came into effect in May this year, and which have a bearing on all business communication. Ian covered the purpose of GDPR; the importance of keeping personal data securely; the purposes for which St A needs to keep and process personal data; and how long data of various kinds will be kept. The Data Controller is the Eldership collectively and the Data Protection Trustee is the Church Secretary.

Everyone must give their explicit consent for data to be held about them, and personal data will be checked once a year for accuracy. Some form of training is required for all those who hold personal data, which this presentation complied with. St Andrew's has drawn up a Data Protection Policy, a Data Privacy Statement and Consent form for all members. As CCTV is used throughout the building for monitoring of criminal behaviour and failure to comply with Conditions of Hire, St Andrew's has had to register with the Information Commissioner's Office.

2. Management Team

Ian reported briefly on lettings, maintenance and repairs. The church website has been refreshed and looks very good. The audio system has been upgraded.

3. Trustees

Judith Adam had little new to report; we are still awaiting informed advice from Synod. There is no precedent for transferring ownership of the building to another denomination or non-religious group. Our only option will probably be to transfer Trusteeship to the Yorkshire Congregational Union - which would not make much difference in practice as we should still be responsible for the day-to-day running of the church.

4. Eldership: The present Eldership was re-elected unanimously

5. Asylum seeker
hearing on 17 September-
23 November. Elizabeth
asked for more
members.



Fatih Dogu's appeal
was postponed to
later. Elizabeth will
attend again
with letters of support from

THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES at 70

We have all heard of the World Council of Churches but do we really know what it is and what it does ? The September issue of Reform magazine had this informative article, which we reproduce here, slightly shortened, with permission.

The World Council of Churches is the most comprehensive ecumenical organisation in history. Its inaugural Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948 brought together representatives from 147 Churches in 44 countries. This was the culmination of a movement that built up throughout the first half of the 20th century and had been delayed because of the Second World War. Today, the WCC has 350 member Churches from 110 countries, the majority in the global south, representing 500 million Christians.

Susan Durber, Minister of Taunton URC and Moderator of the WCC Commission on Faith and Order:

There is an impressive list of programmes that the WCC is famous for, including its programme to combat racism and the 'decade in solidarity with women'. There are documents, like *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* or the Delhi Unity Statement, drafted by Lesslie Newbigin. But the most important thing that the WCC has done, or will do, is to call Christians together so that their unity in Christ becomes visible. The WCC is a fellowship of Churches 'which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit'.

A 'fellowship of churches' sounds like nothing much at first. But immediately after the Second World War, it meant that German Churches were in fellowship with Churches in the rest of Europe and the world. During the Cold War, Churches of the east were in fellowship with Churches in the west. Today, it means that the old mainline Churches of Europe are in fellowship with the flourishing post-colonial Churches - the African indigenous churches, the Latin American Pentecostal churches, the multiplying churches in Asia. The Roman Catholic Church now takes a full role in parts of the Council's meeting and fellowship, as Pope Francis recently affirmed. The conversation and the fellowship are changing along with global Christianity. The WCC holds Churches in fellowship and keeps alive a vision of unity - sorely needed in a world of fragmentation, not only for the sake of the Church but also for humankind and for our common home, the earth.

Unity is not a popular word today and many either fear it or despise it. But Christ prayed for it and the WCC offers a counter-cultural witness by continuing to call the churches into fellowship, or even, communion. That's the true heart of it.

Michael Jagessar is URC Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries:

The WCC's 70th anniversary offers an opportunity to reflect how we mark the past in the present when ecumenical memory seems to be at risk. My connections with the WCC have been through my research and personal

encounters with its third General Secretary, Philip Potter, through teaching ecumenical theology for eight years in Birmingham and attending the Assembly in Busan.

Local ecumenism can risk missing the massive amount of creative work done through the WCC's programmes. Examples include liturgical renewal, dialogues about faith and order, inter-religious conversations, creating space for newer and dynamic theological discourse, giving greater agency to voices and themes from every corner of the globe, and serving as a platform for global issues (the economic system, racism, sexism, integrity of creation, poverty, etc). In this sense, the WCC has been at the cutting edge, a platform, a laboratory, a communion, and a movement towards renewal in the Churches.

Currently, however, the spirit of movement may have become lost in the professionalization of ecumenical roles, organisational malaise, ecumenical politics, and ecclesial insularity. Philip Potter has suggested that the WCC is at its best in very choppy waters of movements and currents. Ecumenism as movement should never be sacrificed! This means allowing the way of Christ to increase while ecclesial self-preservation decreases. This is what Potter refers to as 'costly ecumenism'.

Sarah Moore serves as Area President of the URC in Cumbria:

I sometimes get asked, 'So, what?' What is the 'point' of the WCC ? Is there any point in the URC, and other small member churches, investing in it when its business feels so very far away from many of the concerns and hopes of our local congregations ?

I have represented the URC, and the interests of some of our ecumenical partners who do not have their own member, on the WCC's Central Committee since 2013. Unsurprisingly, my answer to 'Is there any point?' is a resounding 'Yes!' Partly, precisely because we are small. The WCC is a forum where the concerns of the URC can be put alongside those of other small churches. Together, our voice can be heard.

The WCC is a body that directly relates to the big international organisations of our time. It is literally a neighbour of the UN in Geneva, and the WCC's staff and leadership are invited to participate in high-profile policy setting at agencies such as the World Health Organisation. At the last meeting of the WCC Central Committee, in June, Church representatives of both North and South Korea were in attendance; they were able to further their personal friendship as well as to provide reassurance that their churches were holding one another in prayer.

Like any follower of Jesus Christ, part of the vocation of the WCC is to speak truth to power. Each meeting of the Assembly and Central Committee does this, and in between, the WCC researches, writes, and sends statements to governments around the world expressing concern where human rights are not being respected, or where creation itself is not being treasured. The WCC holds before governments the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It reminds governments so of the values of Christ, indeed that 'civil authorities are called to serve God's will of justice and peace for all humankind'.

BUZZ UPDATE

It has been a busy and exciting last few months at Buzz!

Throughout each week, we run 7 projects across Sheffield, supporting around 160 people.

Every week we provide:

1. The Den - Funded by BBC Children in Need

Helping disadvantaged children through a pop-up play den to manage their emotions and increase their confidence and self-belief.

2. YouthQuake – Monday - Fridays in term time – Funded by The Big Lottery

Encouraging young people off the streets and engaging in inspiring activities.

3. Youth Exchange - Funded by Youth Social Action Trust

Support and inspiration for young people in Broomhall to express their own perspectives and have their voices heard, and the opportunity to create lasting social change in their community and make lasting connections with stakeholders, communities and individuals.

4. Curiosity Club – Funded by Children in Need and The Wellcome Trust

Encouraging young people to see science as an enlightening, engaging and enjoyable experience.

5. 2 Older people's Groups - Funded by Brelms Trust

Bringing older, isolated people together to do things they enjoy that make them feel happy.

6. Silver Surfers Older People's Group- Funded by Combatting Isolation and Community Involvement Fund

7. Project Stay Safe - Funded by South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue

A programme of Fire, Water and Road safety and awareness for excluded groups. (Older/Isolated/BAME/Asylum seekers)

We also run international and intergenerational events throughout the year, helping to build communities through socialising, playing and sharing.

We offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities including placements for students, school work experience and volunteering for people to develop 'ready for work' skills or to get more involved in their community.

We have recently been nominated for the Voluntary Action Sheffield Make a Difference Awards, of which we have been 'highly commended' in the Inclusion and Equality Category.

Finally, we are currently carrying out a business mapping exercise. If anyone knows of any businesses that we can approach for fundraising or support for one-off events, please let Paula at Buzz know.