

BRIDGE

August 2019



*The North Cumbria Pastorate
United Reformed Churches*

*Bewcastle
Brampton
Carlisle*

Contacts and Sunday Service Pattern

THE MINISTER

The Revd Nick Mark
156 Lowry Hill Road

CARLISLE

CA3 0ER

Telephone: 01228 526162

Email: nmark@keme.co.uk

THE KNOWE CHURCH

BEWCASTLE

Services: 1.45pm on the first Sunday in the month

Contact: Mrs Doreen Telford

Telephone: 016977 48248

BRAMPTON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

13 MAIN STREET

BRAMPTON

Services: 9.30am on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month

Contact: Mrs Barbara Laird

Telephone: 016977 2376

ST. GEORGE'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

WEST WALLS

CARLISLE

CA3 8UF

www.urccarlisle.org

Services: 11.00am every Sunday

Contact: Mrs Rosalind Fearon

Telephone: 016973 44892

Email: rosrayfearon@talktalk.net

When there is a fifth Sunday in the month

the Service is for the whole Pastorate

Usually at 11.00am at St George's

(Check the North Cumbria Pastorate Services list)

From the Minister

Dear Friends,

It seems appropriate to look at, as I near retirement, the future and the changing shape of the Church as a whole. In one sense it is absolutely wrong for a serving minister to try to influence how the churches he or she serves carries on after that minister departs or retires. In another it is perfectly right and proper, without interfering, to encourage the churches to face the future by reviewing what they are doing. If I want a Biblical authority for that I need look no further forward than the Lectionary Gospel reading for the 25th of August 2019, Luke 13 verses 10-17. It is the story of Jesus healing the woman bent double on the Sabbath. The Synagogue leaders split hairs so to speak by saying had her injuries or disability been life threatening all would be well but because it wasn't life threatening it was wrong to heal on the Sabbath. The healing Jesus performed under God's instruction was for that woman life changing for the better.

We all at times in our lives hide behind rules. If you are not keen on running a particular event the best way of closing it down is to quote Health and Safety legislation. Having for a number of years been involved in the Birdman Competition on the south coast where intrepid folk build planes and try to fly off the local pier, I found it quite possible to comply with the rules but still achieve the goal despite the dangers.

In Cumbria we are in a situation where it is obvious change has to happen because there are many competing demands upon the devoted Christian. We have the concept of the North Cumbria Pastorate to which our 3 Churches belong. Then there is the newer idea of the Mission Community with the exciting challenge that none of the three URC Churches in the North Cumbria Pastorate belong to the same Mission Community but instead relate to a Mission Community which serves the geographical area in which the Church building is sited. Now we have a third factor to take

into account and that is that all 3 churches are part of a United Reformed Church Missional Partnership covering all URC churches in Cumbria.

You are all forgiven if what I have written seems confusing and conflicting. There is though a common thread from all these initiatives and that is the need for us to engage in mission with the communities flourishing outside our own churches otherwise we fail the God we love and adore. Slavish observance of rules like those described in the passage from Luke 13 bring the law into ridicule or disrepute. Equally bad is a total disregard of rules which can only result in chaos.

So where then do we find an answer? Trying to do all the options can only result in fatigue because volunteers have a limit on the number of meetings they can attend and the amount of commitment they can put in. It comes down to the Churches through their Church meetings deciding what is to have the highest priority and what is to have the lowest priority.

To me that is what Luke 13 verses 10-17 is about. Jesus does not go about smashing or ignoring rules for the sake of it. Instead he prioritises how he can help the individual best serve God and shapes the rules to serve God. As the component Churches in the North Cumbria pastorate face the future they need to look at how they can best serve God and bring the love of God to others. Jesus in our chosen passage was fearless because he felt the power of the Holy Spirit guiding him forth.

With every blessing
Nick Mark



Vision Refresh 2020+

100 days of Prayer

Oh No I hear not another initiative! We should all have by now the eye catching black card. This is actually something well worth looking at because it is a real help to churches examining what *God For All* is about. You needn't feel excluded if you are not computer literate. Ask your Church secretary for a copy of the daily prayers which give a real idea of the exciting things happening in our Ecumenical County and how all of us can help with the power of Prayer.

Nick Mark

Heart of the City Mission Community

Report on the Away Day On Tuesday 9th July

Lay and Ordained Representatives of the five Churches met at the Cottage Wood Centre, Calthwaite to review and make further progress towards our launch as a Mission Community on the afternoon of Advent Sunday, 1st December, this year. The Church leaders have all been invited to this Service at The Cathedral with refreshments afterwards at the Tithe Barn.

A Pre Launch Social Event is being planned to take place in the Tithe Barn starting at 6.30pm on Friday 6th September. Captains Mel and Steve will organise a quiz and Canon Michael and Nick will organise food. Tickets will be sold and any profits will go to the Women's Refuge.

Canon Michael produced a prototype for a Bulletin for the Mission Community. The idea was approved with the aim of helping us to share events and avoid duplication and clashes and to keep everyone informed. Discussion of the relationship between Churches Together in Carlisle and Mission Communities is carried forward to a future meeting.

Moving Forward Workshops

Rev Jane Maycock Diocesan, Continuing Ministerial Development Leader and Mission Community Development Leader, discussed the purpose of the Moving Forward Workshops. She provided leaflets on this aspect of Mission Communities aimed at encouraging our congregations to engage in the Mission communities particularly as Stipendiary Ministry becomes a scarcer commodity. The overall aim is to define what Mission community is in our context and to help us work out where we are in the process. Jane asked us to help her by describing the component members and pointed out that we were unusual in having so many different denominations involved.

Planning for the Workshops is as follows and it is accepted that some people will stay for just part of a day.

DAY 1: Catching The Vision: Saturday 18th January 2020 (Venue TBA) 10.00am to 4.00pm. This is a workshop specifically of a practical nature looking at what is the vision for our Mission community rather than the vision of each individual church.

DAY 2: Exploring Change: Saturday 16th May 2020 (Venue TBA) 10.00am to 4.00pm. This is really about understanding and exploring leadership, looking at how we influence each other. Working through the need to have a change of mindset, it emphasises the need to play on our strengths and explores how we need to react to change.

DAY 3: Growing Together: Saturday 19th September 2020 (Venue TBA). Jane explained that this was to look at teamwork, how to disagree well and focus on what we have in common. The Teaching here is based around an American Catholic Patrick M.Lencioni's Book Five Dysfunctions of a team.

DAY 4: Taking Stock - What next?: (Date and Venue TBA). This is about prioritising for the future.

Future Sustainability

Because Nick is retiring, Rosalind Fearon gave a lively and interesting picture of how St George's expect to survive and develop in both the short and medium term with a very much reduced Stipendiary Ministry available. Rosalind, as a local church leader, Ordained Elder and Lay Preacher with training to be a Church Secretary, described how Elders can cover Weddings, Funerals, Pastoral Care, Preaching, Lettings and Building Management. What Rosalind described has been a pattern for a number of years where the Minister, whether stipendiary or not, works with a team of elders. Rosalind explained the power of the Church Meeting and its decision-making role. It was an honest appraisal because Rosalind foresaw future viability issues in the long term.

CITY KIDZ

It is suggested that CITY KIDZ should effectively become the arm of the Mission Community for children. David Pitkeathly agreed to organise a leaders meeting in the near future to revitalise this important area of mission.

Review of past events

Experience of events since our last Mission Communities meeting demonstrates the need for greater participation. The Bitts Park events and the Prayer Day in the City had been successful. The Costa coffee events had run with support only from Tithe Barn and Border Kirk and some participation from the Salvation Army. Better publicity was needed and the possibility of going into the main part of Costa, if management allowed it, should be explored. It was also suggested that we need as Churches to go into the centre of town to explore avenues we could utilise to meet new people where they are.

Future Meeting Dates

Wednesday 9th October 2019: 12noon to 2.00pm hopefully at the URC (To be confirmed)

4th March 2020: 10.00am to 12noon at the Border Kirk

7th July 2020: 10.00am to 3.00pm at Cottage Wood

From the Churches

Bewcastle

It is with great sadness that I report the death of Karen Herbert, Doreen and Bobby Telford's younger daughter on Thursday 11th July after a long fight against serious illness. All our prayers go to Robert her husband, Doreen and Bobby and all the family. The funeral service took place at The Knowe Church on Wednesday 17th July at 12noon.

Our service on the 4th of August at 1.45pm will be led by our Minister. Advance notice is given that our September Service on the 1st at 1.45pm will be led by our Area President Rev Sarah Moore. Also in September on the 15th will be our annual Harvest Service again led by our Minister.



Work continues on tidying up the ground for the Memorial Garden and it is good to see the developments already happening which are in preparation for work to start once Planning Permission is granted.

Nick Mark

Karen Telford Herbert - Obituary

A death is always a time of sadness, but when it is the death of an attractive young woman in the prime of life - a daughter, a wife and the mother of two little children - then, surely, we are plunged into the very depths of sadness.

Nevertheless, this should also be a time of celebration and of pride. For, although Karen's life has been tragically cut short, even so, Karen has lived a full life, a life rich in experience, full of achievement and filled with friendship - a life well lived.

Karen was born on the 4th of September 1973 at Brampton Cottage Hospital. She was the second born daughter of Bobby and Doreen, the first being Dawn.

Karen and Dawn grew up at the Myre and from the offset Karen had a love of the outdoors. Bobby and Doreen had a third child, Craig, and moved to the Hole-of-Lyne. Karen was already familiar with the Hole-of-Lyne as she had spent a lot of time there with her Grandparents, Tommy and Suzie. She also spent a lot of time with her Grandparents George and Maggie at the Manse where her red hair was often seen bobbing about in the Sike. Karen's love of the outdoors flourished at the Hole-of-Lyne and she helped out with a variety of farm tasks and was happy amongst the stock and on the hill. She and Dawn were active in the local young farmers society, where she made friendships which continue to the present day.

Karen was educated at Bewcastle School and Lochinvar before going to St Aidans and Newman High Schools. She was always a hard worker and took various jobs from working at Metalbox to waitressing at Yates Wine bar. Even from this tender age it became apparent that she was determined to achieve whatever she set out for herself. She had a great sense of humour and although she was not suited to many of her early employment choices they were the source of many good stories.

During her gap year after university, Karen applied for a place on Operation Raleigh in Malaysia. Part of the process required the applicant to swim several lengths of an Olympic size swimming pool. Not a strong swimmer, the ever resourceful Karen got a good friend with excellent swimming credentials to take her place and passed with top marks. Thankfully Karen was never put in a position where this was found out.

Karen had a thirst for experiencing different places and cultures. She taught English in Nepal; there may be some Nepalese children out there with a Bewcastle accent. She fed tourists in Iceland going twice around that country as cook on campus tours and nobody

took ill. She visited Kenya with the young farmers and completed the Inca Trail on her own, unbeknown to her parents. One thing which shines through all of these experiences is that she made an impact on all of those she met and worked with and she made many friends who are still friends today.

Karen loved being with people. She was a lively conversationalist and loved to talk about her experiences. She could hold her own in a lively group, and people enjoyed being in her company as she had a great sense of fun and loved the banter. This friend collecting theme continued during Karen's University days, firstly at Cambridge where she studied geography and where sporting prowess was added to her list of qualities as she gained the nic-name "Nutter" in the Newhall ladies football team.

Following Cambridge, Karen attended Aberdeen University where she completed a degree in Land Agency. Her first employment as a trainee Land Agent was with the firm Strutt and Parker in Harrogate where she qualified as a chartered surveyor. She worked in the Morpeth Office for a while before moving to Leeds to join DTZ and work on the Yorkshire Water Estate. She very much enjoyed the work there working with tenant farmers who were used to dealing with a different style of Land Agent. When this young lass with a Bewcastle accent turned up in a dented 205 with a good understanding of what a Leicester tupp was, the tea and cakes were soon on the table.

It was while working as a Land Agent with Strutt and Parker in Harrogate that Karen met Robert. She was letting a house to Robert and a work colleague called John. Karen turned up to let John in the house and discovered she had the wrong keys. Slightly embarrassed, she went back to the office to collect the correct key. While following her back John called Robert to say "the land agent for the letting is a wee cracker and I am going to ask her out." John and Karen's relationship was short lived. Two years later Robert met up with Karen again, at John's wedding and *he* asked her out.

In the year 2000 Karen decided that Land Agency was not for her and she decided to retrain as an accountant. She took up a trainee position with Deloitte and Touche in Edinburgh. It was here that Karen's love of D.I.Y began when she bought a one bedroom flat in Dalry. With Robert as her manual labourer she tiled, plastered, replaced kitchen and bathroom demonstrating again that anything she decided to do she could achieve.

Karen qualified as a Chartered Accountant and following Deloitte and Touche worked for H.Bos, Standard Life and the T.S.B. In her working life again she made more close friends.

During all this time Karen continued to keep her contact with her home and family strong. She regularly returned home to help out on the farm and was never happier than when she could get on the farm bike and go out on the hill. She never lost her connection to this land and her family and it continued to define her as she worked in a very different environment in Edinburgh. Every year she took time off work to help with lambing and the year Bobby broke his ankle she was home as often as she could be.

After a long engagement Robert finally got Karen to agree to marry him and they tied the knot at Coldstream Registry Office on the 1st of March 2014 with Bobby and Doreen as witnesses. Karen missed lambing in 2014 as she was pregnant. She gave birth to Maggie in late July that year. At this time they were living at Westwater in a house which Robert had renovated under Karen's supervision. Karen loved Westwater as the surrounding area was home to many Bluegrey cattle and the keepers and breeders were well known to her parents, so she felt at home.

Karen was aware of the decline of the Whitebred Shorthorn. The link between this now rare breed and the Bluegrey and her love of the landscapes and communities which rely on these breeds led her to form the Bluegrey Cattle Group. Along with the support of Bluegrey cattle breeders on both sides of the border, she successfully applied for funding to promote the breed.

She was instrumental in bringing together the necessary resources to do this including getting the backing of the Duke of Buccleuch as guarantor. This led to Karen being invited to Bowhill to take tea. She turned up nervous but excited, expecting some kind of silver service only to find herself sat on the floor with the Duke making tea from a kettle plugged into the wall.

On the 1st of December 2015 Karen gave birth to her second child George. George sports Karen's red hair, the same as his name sake, Grandad George. In November 2016 Bobby and Doreen bought back the Holmehead farmhouse and the opportunity arose for Karen to return home with her family. She was back to the landscapes and community she had never truly left.

Brampton

Services at Brampton URC in August

Our services on 11th and 25th at 9.30am will be led by our Minister the Revd Nick Mark.

Christian Aid Coffee Morning in Church on 29th May

Nanette Brown organised this Coffee Morning with raffle. Helpers with Nanette were Barbara Laird, Mabel Irving, Vera Kay and Margaret Maughan. There was a good attendance and £60 was raised for Christian Aid. Thanks to all who helped at and supported this event in any way.

Fundraising

Our coffee morning on 26th June in Church raised £95. Many thanks to all who contributed.

Report on Pastorate Service held on Sunday 30th June at 3pm

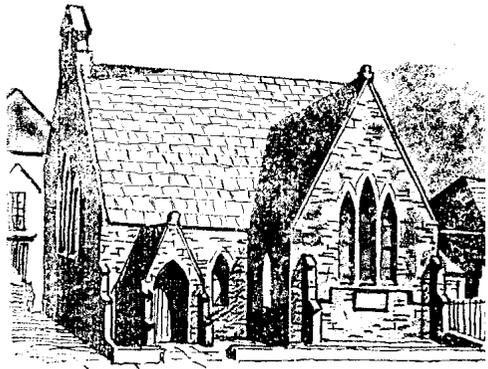
We were joined by friends from St George's on this happy occasion, with this Communion service being led by our Minister the Revd Nick Mark. Martin Johnson played the organ for us. Don Hill and John Salton were the stewards. Olive Cronie read from Acts Chapter 2 v 42-47 and John Salton from the Gospel of Mark Chapter 1 v 16-20.

During the service Nick dedicated our new chairs, which take the place of 2 front middle pews, in memory of our past Treasurer David Jones.

This Pastorate service was more special with John Salton being inducted as a Serving Elder. Lovely Hymns sung included O Jesus, I have promised and Dear Lord and Father of Mankind. Fellowship continued after the service with tea and refreshments being served. Barbara Laird organised this and Margaret Holland and Shirley Brown helped.

News of the Fellowship

It was with great sadness that we heard of the news of the death of the dearly loved daughter of our dear member and friend Vera Kay. Yvonne had courageously fought against cancer for many years. Vera you and all your family continue to be in our thoughts and prayers.



In our thoughts and prayers

We are also remembering Nancy Wilson and Norah Moscrop at this time.

Dates for your Diary

28th August 9.30am: Coffee Morning in Brampton URC

Duty Rotas for August

Stewarding: Barbara Laird and John Salton

Flowers: Florence Scott

Shirley Brown

Carlisle

St George's Services

Aug	4th	11.00am	(Stuart Wilkinson)
Aug	11th	11.00am	(NM)
Aug	18th	11.00am	(Worship Group)
Aug	25th	11.00am	Communion (NM)
Sept	1st	11.00am	(Rosalind Fearon)

Readers

Aug	4th	Tony Wiseman
Aug	11th	John Ware
Aug	18th	Olive Cronie
Aug	25th	Moira Wales
Sept	1st	Elizabeth Mackenzie

Duty Rota

	<u>Elder</u>	<u>Steward</u>
Aug 4th	Will Lindsay	Kathleen Harris
Aug 11th	Tony Wiseman	Valerie Barlow
Aug 18th	Trevor Irwin	Pamela Martin
Aug 25th	Moira Wales	Jessie Overs
Sept 1st	Olive Cronie	Deborah Usher

Communion Duty

	<u>Preparation</u>	<u>Serving</u>
Aug 25th	Will Lindsay	Rosalind Fearon Tony Wiseman

Flowers

Aug	4th	Deborah Usher
Aug	11th	Vacant
Aug	18th	Vacant
Aug	25th	Moira Wales
Sept	1st	Valerie Barlow

Saturday Coffee Morning

Aug	3rd	Rosalind Fearon & Kathy Craig
Aug	10th	Jessie & Michael Overs
Aug	17th	Kathleen Harris & Moira Wales
Aug	24th	Elizabeth & Iain Mackenzie
Aug	31st	Valerie Barlow & Pamela Martin
Sept	7th	Jessie & Michael Overs

From St George's Secretary

News of Members

We are deeply saddened to record that David Bewley died on 10th July after a long spell of increasing frailty. David was a loyal member of our church for many years. We extend our loving sympathy to Maureen and family.

We also extend our sincere sympathy to Doreen, our Bewcastle church secretary, whose youngest daughter has just died.

Tony celebrated a very special birthday in July - we wish him well, together with all his family, and pray that we may enjoy many more years of his warm friendship and good humour.

Dates for your diary

Future Croftfield Services:

5th August 2019 at 2.30pm

16th September 2019 at 2.30pm

Heart of the City Mission Community

Pre launch Social 6th September 2019 in the Tithe Barn

Christian Aid Quiz Night

20th September 7.30pm Tithe Barn

To those who have been on holiday and those who have stayed at home, I hope we will together embark on the Autumn season with renewed enthusiasm.

Rosalind Fearon

September Edition Magazine Photocopying and Collation

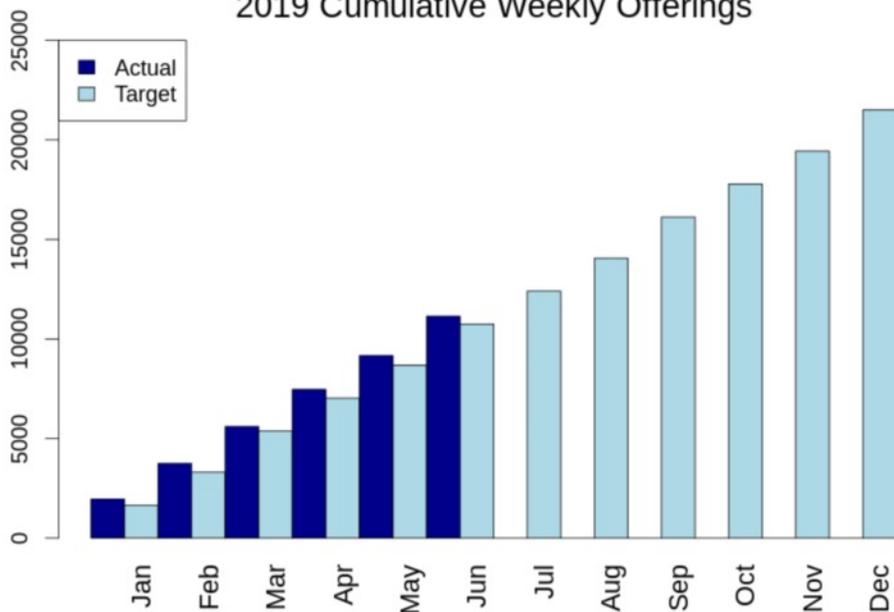
Week commencing Monday 19th August

Pamela Martin & Jessie Overs

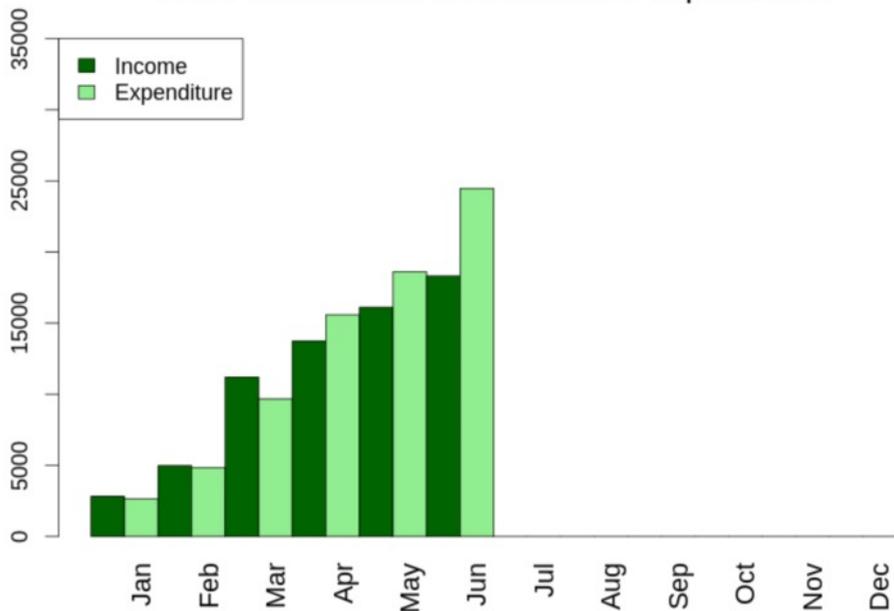
Samaritan's Purse (*Elizabeth Mackenzie*)

I will shortly be starting to cover shoe boxes, to be received at the Shoe Box Service on Sunday, 3rd November. This year we are not to include toothpaste or sweets in the boxes but everything else to be included, as normal. I have been given a lot of hats so no-one need buy any, but please ask me nearer the time.

St. George's URC Carlisle 2019 Cumulative Weekly Offerings



2019 Cumulative Total Income / Expenditure



The Guild

As from 2nd September 2019, 'The Guild' will replace 'The Women's Guild', in the hope that we may recruit gentlemen.

It is also likely that some ladies from the Border Kirk may be joining us: we are shortly to meet with them.

2nd September at 2.00 pm

Margaret Jones speaking about her time in nursing

7th October at 2.00 pm

John Metcalfe - Alan Bennett Readings

4th November at 2.00 pm

Andy Auld (Citizens' Advice Bureau). A talk on "SCAMS"

9th December at 2.00 pm

A Christmas Concert by the U3A Choir, when all are welcome.

A small charge will be made and the proceeds will go to the Great North Air Ambulance

Elizabeth Mackenzie

Social and Fund-Raising

Our Harvest Festival Service will be held on Sunday 22nd September and we are going to arrange a Soup & Sandwich Lunch following that Service. It will be similar to the lunch held earlier this year when most members stayed after the Service and enjoyed food and fellowship together. A list will be available nearer the time to indicate if you will be staying for the lunch.

One other date for your diary: On Friday 25th October at 7.00pm we will be entertained by the Brampton Reivers and Dukes Jam. Tickets at £5 to include refreshments will be available nearer the time. You will remember that this group gave us a most enjoyable evening at the end of last year. We hope the event will be well supported by members and friends and it will be open to our neighbouring churches.

Valerie Barlow

JAMAICA (*Part one*)

Arriving at Manchester Airport at 4.45am is not to be recommended when check-in desks don't open till 7.30am. There were few people in the vast waiting area, minimal heating and doors opening to the near freezing air outside for those passing through. What a difference from the milling crowds of the previous forty-eight hours when planes had been grounded due to an emergency.

When eventually I reached the baggage check-in area I joined the long queues already in line. However, AGE (which I don't normally admit to) has its privilege and I was invited by a smiling member of staff to leave the queue and follow her to hand over my luggage and go straight through to the various security checks. I felt rather like a super star! The flight was called two hours later and again I was collected, taken by lift and escorted to the plane, shown to my seat, hand luggage stored, all before the other passengers boarded.

Our flight was uneventful, the food enjoyable and the crew very pleasant, especially with the many children on board, with frequent messages relayed to them from the captain.

We reached Montego Bay and this time no special treatment; it took a long time to pass through to the outside where my nephew had been waiting for me. We collected the car and drove to our hotel where we were to spend the night rather than face driving to Kingston in the hazards of darkness.

To say the Half-Moon Hotel was palatial is putting it mildly! Expansive, wide cool areas with smiling staff waiting to meet every need and offering a host of activities in the hotel and in the extensive grounds. My bedroom had wonderful air conditioning, a huge king size bed, every kind of toiletry imaginable in the bathroom, well stocked fridge and bar, massive TV and access to the usual technological communications.

We drove up into the hills for dinner to a 'for locals' (not known to the tourists) establishment, dining out of doors in the dim evening

light on local dishes, my first taste of the famous chicken jerky, very enjoyable but with lots of water to cool the palate!

My first impression of Jamaica? HEAT, COLOUR, NOISE. Lots of greenery, jungle clad mountains, wonderful sun blessed beaches and weather and the people courteous and friendly.

After breakfast on the terrace next morning, we set off for Kingston on the opposite side of the Island, a long leisurely drive partly by a coastline of golden sandy beach and crystal clear blue sea, partly on motorway (of which there is as yet very little) and some on partly made stretches of tarmac which have yet to be completed. The temperature here was in mid thirties, as I had been warned, but by half way the clouds closed in and we had showers for the rest of the journey which cooled the air a bit, still hot enough to keep air conditioning going in the car and in the flat (even through the night).

My first day in Kingston was a public holiday (no, not in my honour!) when most attractions were closed but we had lunch in a small Greek restaurant, seated in the open air by a pool with a fountain to enervate the water and hosting several carp, the whole shaded by a covered roof, fortunately as it was raining again, and a spread of greenery, offering a pleasant backdrop for the diners. The owner welcomed us and offered advice on choice of dishes, and even oversaw the serving of the food, which was delicious.

This was Labour Day - the reason for the holiday, when people were expected to do voluntary work. Many would spend it clearing and cleaning sites of rubbish and litter, especially on the beaches.

The Big House, the title given to the plantation type mansions, that we had hoped to visit, was closed but we had a stroll through the grounds which were extensive, mainly shrubs and trees, many in flower. This was Devon House, which we visited later in the week. It was built in 1881 for the first black millionaire, George Stiebel, whose life sounded like the traditional fairy story. He had been sailing with friends when they were shipwrecked off the coast of Venezuela. They managed to swim ashore and remained, working

in the gold mines where he made his fortune before returning to his wife and family.

Other great houses have been demolished to make way for hotels and apartment blocks but Devon House was rescued from developers and in 1990 was declared a national monument. All the rooms were large and spacious with high ceilings, lots of windows and highly polished floors, elegant furniture and ornaments.

Next day we drove up through the mountains to Strawberry Hill, a beautiful Big House, former home of Chris Blackwell of Cross and Blackwell fame but better known from his association with Bob Marley. It is now a high class hotel and restaurant. We decided to leave our promised walk in the mountains till after lunch - fortunately, as halfway through our meal there was a colossal thunderstorm, lasting over an hour and rain like I had experienced in Africa, falling in sheets that made visibility very restricted and lasting for several hours.

We waited for a while but eventually, given an umbrella to make it to the car park, we had to leave and were glad to make the journey safely down the twists and sharp bends back to Kingston - still in the rain. I was quite impressed with my nephew's driving skills and with his car, an automatic Hyundai which made driving so much less wearing than the constant gear changing that mine would have required.

Many of the houses in these dense forested slopes are very spacious, set in apparent isolation, almost hidden in the surrounding jungle. It must have taken great effort to clear and level the hard rocky ground and construct the roads to transport the materials. I wonder why they would choose to be so far from the amenities of civilisation but I am told they have water, electricity and 'all mod cons' and, of course, powerful cars to withstand the hazards of these mountain roads.

Olive Cronie

Next time - people and places.

Jesus-shaped Church: Combating Survivalism

NW Synod's Mission & Discipleship Team

Lawrence, Dave, Darren & Daleen

**"The turnaround moment won't come about
because of a national or local programme,
but when we discover whose we are"**

(May 2019)

Darren writes

The other night I took my wife, Ros, to see traveller, TV presenter and author Simon Reeve. He is an interesting guy having grown up in Acton in West London, failing at school in pretty much every way, battling with a sense of no hope that developed into depression to receiving a chance from someone who was willing to give him a job. That chance was the start of his life turning around and he charted his incredible journey to how he got to where he is today.

The resurrection was a turnaround moment for Jesus's friends. Though he had laid out many times what he anticipated happening to him they still hadn't managed to understand the depth of what he was telling them. After all, he had spoken so often in parables, that surely talking about his dying and rising can only have been metaphorical too?

No wonder they were confused, broken, traumatised by what had happened. No wonder poor Thomas, once ready to go and die with Jesus, now treats the ridiculous tale of his rising from death as some kind of sick joke. Yet it is Thomas in his struggle and hopelessness who encounters the risen Jesus in



such a physical and powerful way that his perspective changes and his life is turned around becoming possibly the most well-travelled of the original twelve in his quest to share the Gospel.

Many of us are feeling tired and drained from a life of faithful service in keeping the activities that make up our church life going. Others may be feeling a sense of hopelessness as we despair at dwindling congregations and the consequent absence of ordained ministry. I would love to say that there is a person, process or training to solve that, but there isn't. The simple truth is that the only thing that can help is Jesus. It is when we surrender the fatigue, the despair and the frustrations to Jesus that he meets us in his risen power with healing, renewal and fresh energy. The turn around moment won't come about because of a national or local programme but when we rediscover whose we are.

When we build our lives and our churches solely upon him that we not only discover the value God places on each of our lives, but we discern his call to the church to be gospel bearers, adventurers, a people who long for, live for, pray for, work to see lives, communities and churches transformed.

Dave writes

A minister shows the congregation her new pet and asks, "Who loves you unconditionally?" The wee boy at the front replies, "I know the answer's Jesus, but it looks like a guinea pig to me!"

If we are feeling as Darren says, tired and drained with a growing sense of hopelessness, it's easy to think the answer should be Jesus, but if we as a group of followers are so worn out by being church, then maybe we ought to:

- stop doing what drains us
- prioritise what invigorates and enriches us as Christians

The solution to our problems with being church is with how we are church, but I agree with Darren that how we are church has everything to do with how we experience Jesus.

For me, a Jesus-shaped church needs to take Easter seriously - really seriously. A Jesus-shaped church is a cross-shaped church. As Jesus went to the cross, I don't believe that he knew for definite that God would raise him to new life. If he did, then it was a very transactional relationship: "If I do this, God will do that ..." I don't think we should behave like that and I don't believe Jesus behaved like that.

Who would not be prepared to weigh up the pros and cons of the cross if the resurrection was a certainty? Certain death followed by certain resurrection becomes a near logical quid pro quo.

But the cross is foolishness - foolishness to the Greeks of Paul's day and to us - precisely because there was no deal made or contract signed. Jesus' death on the cross was not suicide by crucifixion, or a miscalculation of politics and power. Nor was it a deal made with God.

Jesus' death on the cross was an act of grace. Jesus chose the cross out of love. That was his sole motivation.

He chose it without any certainty of being saved. The cross was an act of faithfulness to God, born out of love. Easter Sunday is when we see the unity between the Father and the Son: the Son acts out of love, and the Creator seeing the Son's love, responds in love three days later.

This is how we are called to be church. Like Jesus, we, too, give our last full measure of devotion. We give of our time, energy and love. We live out our lives with acts of faithfulness and, like Jesus, may experience frustration, weariness, and things that feel like crucifixion. But we know, because of Easter, that God responds to



our crucifixion-like experiences with love. When we as a church feel at death's door, we will experience the Life and Love of God.

We are called to follow Jesus, to die and to be raised up every day. Surely that is what it means to be a cross-shaped church?

Daleen writes

I agree with Darren that the answer for resurrection does not lie in engaging in the perfect programme but in focussing on Jesus. That is also the reason why the Mentors, especially this year, focus on becoming Jesus-shaped people/churches. Missional Discipleship takes as its starting point that the Christian Church needs to look recognisably like Jesus and to make the same sort of differences to the lives of people and communities. It is a process of reconnecting the Church with the Jesus we claim to follow. It is active engagement in a process of discipleship - closely following him day by day until we remind people of Jesus. It is about growing Jesus-shaped churches that are part of the Good News we live by and proclaim.

Resurrection is about dying and rising. Dying and rising. That is what happens to Jesus at Easter, and what needs to happen to us and to our world so that we and it can become all God intends us to be. It is not just a one-off event but a spiritual discipline for disciples of Jesus. It is not easy, yet it is the only way to discover the life God has for us in Jesus. It is the most important thing for disciples to learn: it is the secret to becoming and living like Jesus. It is the key to effective and faithful mission.



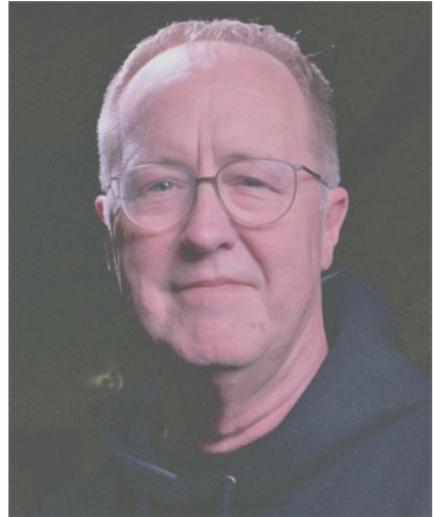
Yes, and part of resurrection is about laying down our burdens and realise that we have to turn to Jesus. It is about Jesus becoming more and I becoming less. And yes Dave is right, Jesus did not have

any guarantees that he would survive but that is the point, the focus should be on becoming Jesus shaped people and not on survival.

Our job is not the upkeep of God's church or to ensure that the church will survive. Our job is to become a movement that is willing to die in our self, to become resurrected people that are more Jesus-Shaped and which forms more Jesus-Shaped churches. In order to do so, we have to ask our self what needs to die in our self, the church has to discern what needs to die or needs pruning, in order to be resurrected. Following Jesus is a vocation to share the fate of Christ for the life of the world.

Lawrence writes

Leonard Cohen's second novel, *Beautiful Losers*, contains the poem, "God is Alive, Magic is Afoot". It's that word, "Magic" that signals for me the irrepressible joy, energy and vitality that faith in the Easter Jesus brings. It's the kind of life that God wills for us. It ought also to be what springs most readily to people's lips when they try to describe their experience of the church.



That can often seem a world away from the experience of churches stuck in survivalist mode. They can identify with Good Friday because life feels like one long crucifixion, full of duty, pain and struggle. They share Jesus' terror that God might have abandoned them. And while they "technically" believe in resurrection, it seems like a distant, desperate hope, rather than a daily experience.

That's why I want to respond to Dave by saying, "Yes, it's absolutely about being cross-shaped ... but it's also about being resurrection-shaped. Easter-shaped, in other words!"

For survivalist churches, “magic” can sound dangerously like a fairy tale. “Once upon a time, Jesus came. They crucified him. But God raised him and they all lived happily ever after”. Survivalist churches really struggle to confront how bad things are. They wish desperately that resurrection means we can ignore Good Friday and move straight on to Easter Sunday’s “happily ever after”. But unless and until we confront what is wrong in the church and the real cost of living faithfully, we will miss out on the transformation that Easter brings. As Jesus said: it is only when we discover how to die that we will learn how to live!

Resurrection is the only power that makes it possible to confront our fears, failures and addiction to survival. It is the only source of the power we need to move out of our comfort zones, to give up on the search for a programme that guarantees success, to abandon a life of “managing decline” and step out on the risky, costly, joyful journey to becoming a Jesus-shaped church.

Bridge

Please note that material for the September issue of Bridge should be in the hands of the editor by

Sunday 11th August

Articles may be handed or sent by post, telephone or email to

**Peter Day
30 Naworth Drive
CARLISLE
CA3 0DD**

Telephone: 01228 818392

Email: deepray@btinternet.com

North Cumbria Pastorate Services

The Knowe Church, Bewcastle

Aug	4th	1.45pm	Communion (NM)
Sept	1st	1.45pm	(Revd Sarah Moore)
Sept	15th	1.45pm	Harvest Festival Service (NM)

Brampton URC, Main Street, Brampton

Aug	11th	9.30am	(NM)
Aug	25th	9.30am	(NM)

St George's URC, West Walls, Carlisle

Aug	4th	11.00am	(Stuart Wilkinson)
Aug	11th	11.00am	(NM)
Aug	18th	11.00am	(Worship Group)
Aug	25th	11.00am	Communion (NM)
Sept	1st	11.00am	(Rosalind Fearon)

Dates for your Diary

August

5th	2.30pm	Service at Crofffield Care Home
20th	2.00pm	Dementia Tea Service at St George's
28th	9.30am	Coffee Morning in Brampton URC

September

2nd	2.00pm	St George's 'The Guild' Margaret Jones - Her time in nursing
6th	6.30pm	Pre-launch Social at Tithe Barn (see pages 5 & 15)
15th	1.45pm	Harvest Festival Service at Bewcastle
16th	2.30pm	Service at Crofffield Care Home
17th	2.00pm	Dementia Tea Service at St George's
20th	7.30pm	Quiz Night for Christian Aid at Tithe Barn
22nd	11.00am	Harvest Service at St George's followed by Soup & Sandwich Lunch

October

7th	2.00pm	St George's 'The Guild' John Metcalfe - Alan Bennett readings
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Commitment for Life

Prayer Partners

August

A Restless Hope

Do not give us rest, Lord
while people are hungry and we are rich.
As long as justice is a dream,
press us on and do not give us rest.

Do not give us peace, Lord
while people live in fear and we are safe.
As long as hatred stifles love,
stir us up and do not give us peace.

Do not give us comfort, Lord
while people are desperate and we are well.
As long as lives are lived in pain,
disturb us and do not give us comfort.

But give us hope to share, O Christ,
hope that disturbs and stirs and shakes,
the hope of Job, the hope of the lame,
a hope of new life beyond the pain.
Until all find comfort and peace and rest,
Christ, give us hope to share.

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Prayer Handbook 1995

