

ST. ANDREWS UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Upper Hanover Street, Sheffield, S3 7RQ

MESSENGER

Price £1.25

March and April 2023



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Church Secretary Elizabeth Draper, 52 Highcliffe Drive, S11 7LU (230 7252)
 F.W.O Secretary Shelagh Beach
 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 Elizabeth Draper, email elizdraper504@btinternet.com
 Barbara Macmillan, email bjmacmi@gmail.com
 Monica Hanna, email monica.hanna@btinternet.com
 Paula Higgins email paula@buzzsheffield.co.uk

Webmaster

Website: <http://www.standrewsurcsheffield.org.uk>
 Buzz at St. Andrews Child Contact Centre Coordinator 07905417228
 Email childcontactcentre@buzzsheffield.co.uk

CALENDAR for March and April 2023

Sun	5 Mar	10.45am	Mr Ian Wilman (Salvation Army)
Tues	7 Mar	10 am	Community Choir
Sat	11 Mar	9.30 am	Yorkshire Synod meeting
Sun	12 Mar	10.45 am	Rev Canon Adrian Alker
Mon	13 Mar	2.30 pm	Elders meeting
Tues	14 Mar	10 am	Community Choir
Tues	14 Mar	2.30 pm	Worship Group meeting
Thurs	16 Mar	10 am	Management Team meeting
Sun	19 Mar	10.45 am	Rev Inderjit Bhogal
Tues	21 Mar	10 am	Community Choir
Wed	22 Mar	2.30 pm	Elders service planning meeting
Sun	26 Mar	10.45 am	Rev Dr Walter Houston
Tues	28 Mar	10 am	Community Choir
Sun	2 April	10.45 am	Rev Kirsty Massey - Palm Sunday followed by a lunch for students
Mon	3 April	2.30pm	Elders meeting
Tues	4 April		NO Community Choir
Friday	7 April	11 am	Good Friday service
Sun	9 April	10.45 am	Rev Dr David Stec - Easter Communion
Tues	11 April		NO Community Choir
Sun	16 April	10.45 am	Rev Dr Michael Bayley
Tues	18 April	10 am	Community Choir
Thurs	20 April	10 am	Management Team meeting
Sun	23 April	10.45 am	Mr Chris Limb
Tues	25 April	10 am	Community Choir
Sun	30 April	10.45 am	Rev Helena Roulston
Tues	2 May	10 am	Community Choir
Sun	7 May	10.45 am	Worship Group Coronation service

We wish you all the joys and blessings of Easter



Lord of Life

Most glorious Lord of life, that on this day
Didst make thy triumph over death and sin;
And having harrowed hell didst bring away
 Captive thence captive, us to win;
This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin,
And grant that we for whom thou didst die
Being with thy dear blood clean washed from sin,
 May live for ever in felicity.

And that thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love thee for the same again;
And for thy sake that all like dear didst buy,
 With love may one another entertain.
So let us love, dear love, like as we ought.
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

*Edmund Spenser
(1552-99)*

LIGHT AND SALT

Matthew 5:13 You are the salt of the earth.

Matthew 5:14 You are the light of the world.

With these words, Jesus declares to his followers the magnitude of their calling to live the Christian life. And St Matthew intensifies the force of Jesus' words by the context in which he places them quite early in his Gospel.

Jesus has been baptized by John the Baptist, tempted by the devil in the wilderness; and he has called his first disciples, and begun his teaching ministry. In a terse passage at the end of chapter 4 St Matthew tells us, "And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people. ... And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan." Then as the next chapter opens, Jesus goes up onto a mountain and teaches the crowds together with his disciples in the words of what we now call the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus begins this body of teaching with the beatitudes, in which he declares some of the values pertaining to the kingdom of heaven.

And then he addresses his followers with the words, "You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world". These sayings are so fundamentally important with regard to what it means to live the Christian life that they need to be expressed at this early stage in Jesus' ministry and near the beginning of this great sermon. Matthew is saying both that these express the essential nature of what it is to be a Christian, and that at this early stage Jesus already has enough confidence in his followers to say to them:

"You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world".

The metaphors of light and salt have some important things to say to us about the importance of being genuine in our practice of the Christian faith.

There is something very special about light. Right at the beginning, after God had created the heavens and the earth, light was the first thing created by the word of God, and we are told that "God saw that the light was good." Thus throughout scripture and likewise in the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls, light is presented as representing

such things as goodness, hope, salvation and justice. It is particularly associated with the word and commandments of God. Thus the psalmist could say, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (119:105). And the writer of Proverbs 6:23 could say, "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life."

One important characteristic of light is that it is not a static thing, but a form of energy that moves, indeed it moves faster than anything else in the universe, and has an instant impact upon anything on which it falls.

Thus Jesus says that one does not light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but upon a stand, so that it gives light to all in the house.

Jesus uses light as a metaphor for something external that emanates from the person living the Christian life, and has an impact on all those around. He tells his followers, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Jesus' other metaphor, that of salt, expresses something very different, but equally important. Far from being a dynamic force like light, salt stands for something that is internal to a substance, an essential characteristic. Thus when Jesus says, "You are the salt of the earth," he adds, "But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men."

Of course, salt cannot possibly lose its taste. The taste of salt is its essential characteristic, and if the substance that we call "salt" did lose its taste, it would no longer be salt, but something else. It would be unfit for the purpose for which salt is used. Jesus here uses salt to represent the inner values of his followers, the genuineness of their faith, their sincere conviction.

Those who have these inner values live the kind of life described in the Beatitudes, which Jesus has just pronounced. They are poor in spirit, folk who mourn, ones who are meek, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, who are merciful, pure in heart, and live as peacemakers, despite being persecuted for righteousness' sake. Such people can truly be said to be the "salt of the earth".

What Jesus says here is not unlike what the prophet behind our OT lesson from Isaiah 58 was expressing. This passage is addressed to the Jews who were seeking to rebuild their lives and restore their ruined towns and villages after their return from exile in Babylon.

Evidently, they were disappointed that despite observing the customary fast days, their fasting has gone unheeded by God, since he still withholds his blessing from them.

The prophet replies that God does not desire such fasts, and he gives a new definition of the word “fast”, in which he sets out the conduct which is acceptable to God, and which will move him to answer their cry. The kind of “fasting” that God requires involves loosening the bonds of wickedness, letting the oppressed go free, sharing one’s bread with the hungry, bringing the homeless poor into one’s house, and clothing the naked. The prophet assures his people that when they practise this kind of fasting, their light will break forth like the dawn, and the glory of the Lord shall be their rear guard.

It is not without significance that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus’ saying about salt precedes his saying about light. For it is only when his followers inwardly, deeply and sincerely hold the values of the kingdom of God that they can be the salt of the earth, and practise the kind of life which makes them the light of the world. The kind of life which they lead will mean that their light shines out and makes a real difference for good to the world around them.

Revd Dr David Stec

FLOWERS

Instead of a weekly rota of people who donate flowers for our Sunday service, we now have a beautiful arrangement of artificial flowers in place.

If anyone wishes to provide fresh flowers to commemorate some special date or memorial, please do so, and then write your name on the list on the back of the vestry door.

There is also the opportunity to bring a small fresh bunch to give to the visiting preacher; again, if you do this, please sign in the relevant column on the list.

SERVICE SHEET

If you have any notices to go in the service sheet, please send them to the person who is preparing them for that month. The rota now is:

Judith Adam:	January, April, July and October
Sheila Cooke:	February, May, August and November
Jean Dickson:	March, June, September and December

COFFEE

Sheila Cooke is keeping the rota for coffee after service on Sundays. Please tell Sheila if you would like to help.

FAMILY NEWS

Some joyful news to start with. Baby Luke was born to **Victor and Aimee Li** on 25 March and all are doing well. They now live near York where Victor is specialising in anaesthetics and Aimee will in due course continue her career as an artist in glass. Their parents and Aimee's brothers have been over too, visiting their new grandchild and nephew. Our congratulations, love and all good wishes to the new family.



Wilma Love's removal date came up at short notice sooner than expected and she has now actually departed on 4 April. She has moved to Kidderminster to be near daughter Gillian. We shall miss her greatly, although she has not been able to attend church for some time. She was always a friendly, gracious and helpful member. We wish Wilma many years of health and happiness in her new home.

John Fall's hip operation went well and he is now on the slow and challenging road to recovery; we are glad for him and Margaret. Our former minister **Peter Chave** is in remission after treatment for his leukaemia; we are thankful to hear that and keep Peter and Sarah in our prayers.

We know only too well that infections are rife, both Covid and chest infections, and many of our members and friends have had a difficult and unpleasant time recently, including Sheila and Martin Dunstan, Anne Robertson, Elizabeth Draper, Christina Stark . . . We hope that the warmer weather and longer days will be cheering. **Dorothy Adam** is still in The Limes for assessment. **John Price's** mobility is very limited but he is well supported by neighbours and his nephew and especially by Janet Brown. **Christina Stark** and her partner Dave were shocked to learn that what had seemed to be a toothache problem was actually cancer of the jaw; he underwent successful surgery on 29 March to remove the tumour and part of the jaw but there will be a 12-month recovery time and radiation treatment. His heart condition is an added complication.

We keep all the friends and members who cannot get to church in our thoughts and prayers and send them every good wish.

We enjoy hearing from former members. **Dr John Clark**, who visited last year, says:

I appreciate the magazine. For a relatively small congregation, it is clearly still an active and productive one, but then I remember it always being so. It is good to see so many recognisable names in the pages and the continuing fond attachments from so many who have since moved away from Sheffield, like myself. I will always treasure my time there, the people I met and the welcome and kindness shown. Do let me know if you are doing anything special for your 170th anniversary.

Best wishes, John

And from **Amy Cook** (in February):

I really love getting The Messenger! At the moment, I am at home in isolation because I have Covid, despite being fully vaxxed and boosted. But as I am "exposed" to the public five days a week in my job at our local library, I suppose it was bound to happen at some point. Although I feel pretty rough, I know that my case has been mild compared to so many others who have suffered so much more than I have.

I was with my mom for a week for Christmas in South Texas. We miss my dad, but we are thankful that we can be together. I was fortunate in that I flew before and after all the flight cancellations that happened over the Christmas weekend!

All the best, Amy

LOOKING AHEAD

Good Friday: Our service will be at **11am on 7 March** in the church, shared as usual with our friends at Trinity URC, and followed by hot cross buns.

Easter Sunday communion will be led by Rev Dr David Stec and trumpeter Gordon Truman is joining us.

On **7th May** the Worship Group will lead a service reflecting on the King's coronation the day before; and the **14th May** service is planned by the Elders.

Coronation weekend: St Andrew's has no plans for other special events to mark the coronation but we hope you will find celebrations near to home to make it a memorable holiday.

170th anniversary: The service on **11 June** will be in celebration of the founding of St Andrew's. It will be led by Rev Fleur Houston and Rev Sarah Hall will be visiting that day - a happy conjunction! Watch this space for more details.

The ramp: Work on this essential development will begin when the weather is suitable for setting concrete.

LOOKING BACK

A real old-fashioned **CHURCH LUNCH** was held in the hall after the service on 2 April for the students who have been attending recently – a jolly sociable occasion with 25 people. The students were lively and interesting and it was a delight to hear about where everyone came from. The bring-and-share food was excellent, as ever. Everyone helped. The highlight of the desserts was the cake by Etsi, an architecture student; she had combined her design and culinary skills in its creation including handmade chocolate lattice to decorate the edges.





Etsi cutting her cake



WIDER CHURCH

Throughout Lent the Sheffield Team Ministry have run a Thursday evening series of meditation and prayer on Zoom and will hold a live Maundy Thursday service at Gleadless URC at 7pm on 7 April.

The Annual Elders Conference will be held hybrid in Harrogate and on Zoom on Saturday 15 April, on the theme of Resilience. All members, not just elders, are invited to join in.

Yorkshire Synod has made available grants totalling £34K (out of the allocated £50K) to churches finding difficulty meeting in increased energy costs, for the fourth quarter of last year. A similar sum is available for quarter one of 2023.

The Synod Clerk's fortnightly online bulletin is very informative and is forwarded to all our members.

Synod's March meeting is reported on Page 18.

WORDS OF LOVE

Jenny Carpenter gave us an interesting exercise when she was leading the service recently. Her theme was 'Show the Love' and she asked us to list adjectives for each letter of the alphabet to describe God's love. So, in small groups each working on four letters, we quickly produced the list below. It is by no means exhaustive! So do add your own words.

Amazing, awesome, abundant
Brilliant, boundless, bounteous
Continual, costly, costless, charitable
Devoted, divine
Encompassing, everlasting, eternal, energising, elevating
Forgiving, fruitful, fortifying
God-given, good, great, gracious, glorious, gentle
Holy, helpful, hopeful, heartfelt, harmonious
Imperishable, incomparable, immortal, invisible, inspiring
Joyous, just
Kingly, kind
Loving, long-lasting, laughing, living, lavish
Marvellous, magnificent
Natural, nurturing, never-ending, never-failing
Omniscient, omnipresent, outstanding, omnipotent
Perfect, perpetual, pre-eminent
Quiet, quintessential, quite amazing
Real, redeeming
Sharing, sincere, saving, sacred, stupendous
True, trusting, tremendous
Undying, unifying, unconditional, undeserved, uplifting
Victorious, vivifying, vast
Wounded, wonderful
Excessive (!)
Yearning
Zesty



A Sheffield heroine - MARY ANNE RAWSON

On Friday 11 September 1846 the celebrated orator and former slave Frederick Douglas addressed an audience of 800 people at the old Quaker Meeting House in Sheffield, dispelling the assumption that slavery had been ended with the Act of 1834. His autobiographical writings were pivotal to the abolition of slavery, as they educated people worldwide and inspired them to take action.

The following day he visited Mary Anne Rawson, leader of the Sheffield Anti-Slavery Society, at Wincobank Hall.

Mary Anne Rawson (1801-1887) was born at Green Lane, Kelham Island in 1801, then lived at Royds Mill until 1816 when her family moved to Wincobank where she founded a school, now known as Upper Wincobank Chapel. With her mother and sisters she distributed pamphlets and made house to house visits, successfully persuading 75% of Sheffield women to boycott sugar and coffee produced by slave labour in the West Indies. Inspired through her conversations with many radical and forward-thinking people, she was a lifelong campaigner for the immediate and universal abolition of slavery and for education for all. She is buried in Zion Graveyard, Attercliffe.

This commissioned mural by the artist Katy Sett will become part of the Kelham Island Arts and Heritage Trail.

Friends of Zion Graveyards hold open afternoons, normally from 2pm to 4pm on the second Sunday of every month, ie the next are 9th April (Easter Sunday) and 14th May. You could also have a look at Friends of Zion Graveyard Facebook page for more information.



Wall painting of Mary Anne Rawson and Frederick Douglas

PRAISE THE LORD

*From a service last year led by The Revd Canon Adrian Alker.
To save space, we have not included the hymn words.]*

This service was different. As a follow-up to the previous week when we introduced and sang some of our favourite hymns, Adrian also focussed on hymns and led a discussion on why we may like particular hymns and what constitutes a good hymn. He reminded us how integral singing is to worship and the variety of singing which we find in worship to-day: chant in monastic settings, the vast repertoire of hymns written in the Victorian era, charismatic and rock styles of singing, Taizé chants.

Each denomination has its own hymn book. Rejoice and Sing was compiled to mark the establishment of the URC. Later, in 1998, Common Ground was published. This was the brainchild of John Bell who invited all the major Christian traditions in Scotland to contribute to a new hymn book – a truly ecumenical one. The focus was on newer compositions and although there is a bias towards Scottish writers and composers, over 20 percent of the material is from nations in the southern hemisphere.

We sang four hymns from Common Ground. We discussed each one and here are Adrian's comments and our observations.

Sing for God's Glory. CG 111

A good opening hymn should be familiar. If the words are new, the tune should be well known, otherwise the congregation struggles! Kathy Galloway set the words of her hymn to a familiar tune – Lobe den Herren. You may know it as the tune to 'Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the king of creation.'

The words in this hymn are beautiful and evoke strong images. The first verse is an uplifting praise to God. Subsequent verses go on to reflect on God's power and justice and on the departed who have journeyed in faith before us, who inspire us and give us hope. People felt that this hymn, like the best poetry, merited several readings to absorb the significance of the words.

Here I am, Lord. CG 50

Words and music are by the North American composer Daniel L. Schutte. It is reminiscent of the boy Samuel hearing God speaking to him in the temple.

The opening lines of each verse describe God's power and omnipotence in nature, Subsequent lines go on to describe what God will do to save, put love into people's hearts and give life. There is hope. BUT – God needs us to spread the message and act for Him.

We sang this hymn after a reading from Jeremiah who describes how God appointed him as a prophet to the nations, to go out and speak as God commanded.

We cannot measure how you heal. CG138

Words by John Bell to the tune Ye Banks and Braes.

The Gospels include many accounts of Jesus healing people. These miracles may well be challenged as impossible by modern medicine and science. However, there is no doubt that the very presence of Jesus seemed to bring about healing. We sang this hymn after hearing Luke's account of how Jesus healed a woman who had been unable to stand up straight for eighteen years. John Bell's words acknowledge that we cannot understand how Jesus heals but our faith tells us that he can heal; love exists alongside pain, guilt and fear. The love and touch of others, and the Spirit, can mend, bring peace, and make a broken people whole. We need this so much at a time when people are fearful and broken.

Heaven shall not wait. CG 49

Words by John Bell and Graham Maule. Music by John Bell.

Adrian shared a striking quote with us, "Some people are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly use." (Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr) Simply, don't obsess with the afterlife – improve life on earth now for those in need. We need to take our example from Jesus and befriend, fight injustice, put people before huge profits and dividends, show compassion and love NOW.

Adrian's message was, yes, hymns are important in our praise of God, but they should also make us think and spur us on to do what is right.

Summarised by Judith Adam

INTER-FAITH MUSIC

P J W Kirk posted a question on the Anglican Chant Appreciation Society page, as to whether Anglican Chant was used in Synagogue Worship. It was an interesting question which got me thinking, and I posted this reply:

In Sheffield (UK) the Synagogue hosts an annual ecumenical service in support of the NHS. I have played the organ to accompany the music, which is much the same every year, almost exclusively from the Psalms. There were some chanted in free rhythm by the Rabbi with chordal accompaniment, not very different to singing John Merbecke's Creed, for example. There were some metrical psalms, and some verses sung by the congregation at significant moments (such as the opening and closing of the Ark.)

Some tunes familiar to Anglicans were clearly evident, such as the Yigdal (used for the hymn 'The God of Abram praise'). There was a combination

of prayers and music sung at times in English and at others in Hebrew, a not unfamiliar practice in Welsh churches where services flip between Welsh and English. What is interesting is that the musical content was compiled by the Rabbi and based on what he knew by heart, essentially. The congregational singing was really a remnant of a partly forgotten tradition, kept alive by seasonal repetition. The organ (a limited electronic with a short pedalboard) was only used once a year (though I also accompanied a Batmizvah of a friend featuring almost the same extracts as used at the NHS service). I got the impression that an opportunity to form a choir and develop new traditions would have been welcomed and somewhat enlightening, and that metrical psalms, plainchant and Anglican chant could all form part of worship in the Synagogue. Why not? But in my limited experience as a Jew raised by a converted mother in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, it would take a Jewish musical director with a Christian background to bring this about. Someone who could worship exclusively in Old Testament traditions. The problem is, once you have accepted God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, could you really go back?

Shalom

Douglas Jones

LECTIONARY READINGS for March and April 2023

- March 5 Genesis **12**: 1-4a; Psalm **121**;
Romans **4**: 1-5, 13-17; John **3**: 1-17
- March 12 Exodus **17**: 1-7; Psalm **95**; Romans **5**: 1-11;
John **4**: 5-42
- March 19 1 Samuel **16**: 1-13; Psalm **23**;
Ephesians **5**: 8-14; John **9**: 1-41
- March 26 Ezekiel **37**: 1-14; Psalm **130**;
Romans **8**: 6-11; John **11**: 1-45
- April 2 Psalm **118**: 1-2, 19-29; Matthew **21**: 1-11;
Palm /Passion Isaiah **50**: 4-9a; Psalm **31**: 9-16; Philippians **2**: 5-11;
Matthew **26**:14--**27**:66 **or** Matthew **27**: 11-54
- April 9 Acts **10**: 34-43 **or** Jeremiah **31**: 1-6; Psalm **118**: 1-2, 14-24;
Easter Day Colossians **3**: 1-4 **or** Acts **10**: 34-43;
John **20**: 1-18 **or** Matthew **28**: 1-10
- April 16 Acts **2**: 14a, 22-32; Psalm **16**; 1 Peter **1**: 3-9;
John **20**: 19-31
- April 23 Acts **2**: 14a, 36-41; Psalm **116**: 1-4, 12-19;
1 Peter **1**: 17-23; Luke **24**: 13-35
- April 30 Acts **2**: 42-47; Psalm **23**; 1 Peter **2**: 19-25;
John **10**: 1-10
- May 7 Acts **7**: 55-60; Psalm **31**:1-5, 15-16; 1 Peter **2**:2-10;
John **14**:1-14

WHERE WERE YOU at the Coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953?

The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in June 1953 was a huge event in the national story: an estimated 3 million watched it in person as the procession wound its way round London, but another 27 million saw it through the new medium of TV. In Britain, the manufacturers and retailers of televisions seized the business opportunity and sales of sets rocketed.

As my father was always up to date with electrical gear of any sort, we soon became owners of a TV set in a walnut cabinet with a screen size of 12". Yes, inches and of course, in black and white. We were instantly popular with friends and family. People angled shamelessly for an invitation and on the actual day our sitting room was packed with relatives and friends seated on every chair, stool and cushion we could find. It was estimated that an average of 17 persons watched each small screen around the country. Our own average might have been a little higher.

And there they stayed all day and evening, mesmerized by the passing grandeur. Those living close by must have gone home for lunch but a small number of relatives who had come a long way were served lunch. And all were determined to watch until the final firework display. That meant a lot of teacups, and later glasses, to be washed.

And what did I see of the coronation? Not a great deal. I even missed the smiling Queen Salote of Tonga, who made such a positive impression on the public, because I was fully occupied in helping my mother to serve tea and cakes to all present, not to mention washing cups in between. As I picked my way through our audience to collect cups and saucers, I caught the occasional glimpse of all the Queen's soldiers and all the Queen's men marching, and even a sight of her Majesty, but most of the procession was not seen by me. So, if anyone wishes to come to my house to watch the coronation of King Charles on my 36inch TV, will they please bring their own thermos and biscuits.

Monica Hanna

As my father was the doctor who looked after the Royal Family whenever they were staying at Balmoral Castle, he and my mother received an invitation to the Coronation ceremony of Queen Elizabeth II at Westminster Abbey on June 2nd 1953. He also received two tickets for a covered spectator stand in the Mall which my mother's sister and I (aged 14) were very excited to be given.

My parents had to be in their seats, high up above the Great West Door in the Abbey by 6.30 am, where there were no toilet facilities, so made sure they had nothing to drink after their meal the previous evening! My aunt and I were also in our seats by 6.30 am. We took sandwiches and biscuits with us and fortunately did have access to toilets.

Despite the rain which fell most of the day, the atmosphere was one of a very happy celebration. We all chatted to the folk around us. There was much cheering and flag waving as we watched the parades of servicemen and women marching down the streets lined with service personnel. There were bands marching, pipes playing, representatives from countries all over the world marching, driving in cars and in carriages. I will always remember the Queen of Tonga, in an open carriage, despite the rain, a lovely, large smiling lady waving to everyone and cheered on by the crowds. We saw the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh go past in the amazing Gold coach and again on their return, when the ceremony was all over. We could hear what was happening in the Abbey as it was relayed over loud speakers, but of course in those days it was not possible to have the ceremony projected onto a screen, so caught up with that on TV in the evening.

I also remember the thrill when word got around from the crowd telling us that Edmund Hillary and Tenzing had reached the summit of Everest, an achievement which seemed appropriate for the beginning of our new Queen's reign.

Sheila Cooke

I was doing National Service based at RAF Rufforth near York. Some of the lads were selected to go to London to see it all - and probably got very wet as it was pouring rain on the day. But we were all relieved of duties and I may have gone home for the day. There was a small b/w TV in the NAAFI, which we always watched in the dark, as people did then. I don't remember any special meal or celebration.

John Price

I was seven at the time of the coronation. We had bought a Bush television for my Father's birthday in October, trying to slow him down. On the Coronation day all our neighbours came round to watch proceedings. I remember the chairs set out like a cinema. We had sandwiches and cakes during the event. I was given a toy gold coach which I treasured but it disappeared from the family home. I was also given a lovely propelling pencil which I still have. I think it was kept safely away so that it did not get broken. A memorable day in which my grandmother always stood up for the National Anthem even though she was 86.

Sheila Dunstan



Sheila's Coronation Pen

It was the end of my first year at St Andrew's University and first year finals were taking place; there were no exams on the actual Coronation Day but I was revising part of the time. However, in the evening we went out to the cinema to see the first film of the event, and very impressive it was. I actually have a stronger memory of the impact of Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tensing's conquest of Everest, which was announced just the day before and gave the country such a surge of pride and the exciting expectation of a new Elizabethan age.

Elizabeth Draper

SYNOD NOTES - Saturday 11 March 2023

[38 on Zoom, a similar number in person at Herringthorpe URC]

The Moderator opened with worship on discerning the Spirit. What are we called or drawn to or commanded to do? And how do we answer Jesus' question: Who do you say I am? Teacher? Healer? Prophet? God's Son, offering himself for the life of the world?

Synod is concentrating on five expressions of Mission: Sharing, Building, Partnering, Loving, Inviting. There will be four Synod forums during the year to engage and explore through conversation how to take Christ's message out. We discussed how Synod helps or could help us be more effective in mission.

Training in mental health awareness is to come after requests from churches, especially from young people. The aim is to ensure that churches are resourced to supply help, through training, advice, funding. The first session took place in person on 27 March and there will be other sessions online.

Dan Morell reported on the URC Youth Assembly in January. Wilderness Hub is the coverall name for all Synod's youth work and an impressive list of resources is available. Five posts, called "Enablers", have been created to work with local youth workers.

Helen Owen, Synod Green Apostle, now has a Green Working Group of six representing North, West and South Yorkshire, with the aim to encourage each church and individual members to become more green. It is important for our comfortable western lifestyle to change.

Legacies of slavery: Zaidie Orr introduced a video 'Telling it like it is', showing the experiences of non-white ministers and church workers in the URC. General Assembly in July 2022 agreed a Confession and Apology, and is now seeking practical actions, individually, nationally, globally, to repair justice; costed proposals will be brought to General Assembly this year. Churches should be a model. One initiative is not enough; this is a journey. We need to become not just not racist but actively anti-racist, and support with action.

A Resolution was passed to create the new role of Communications and Digital Lead. Previously this work was shared among the current IT task force along with their other jobs with no one person leading on this increasingly important area. Digital media is a most effective form of outreach, especially for young people now as a way to engage; much less threatening than coming into a church.

Matt Knowles, Safeguarding Officer, reiterated the importance of this area of work.

In the closing worship, the Moderator asked: Who does Jesus say we are? Salt and light (Matt.5: 13-14). Salt makes food taste better, makes it more attractive; or makes an interesting contrast eg salted caramel. Salt is better when scattered, spread around. Similarly, Christians make no difference if alone, private, cut off; we need to make contact.

THE TREASURER'S REPORT was mainly positive. Our normal income was better than budgeted by £47k, due to increased interest on our large cash holdings and our investments. Receipts from property sales were in the region of £1.4 million.

Core office costs saw salary increases and the deployment of a new Safeguarding Assistant but these were offset by lower costs on running the Synod office so the overall overspend was only £11k. Committee costs were lower than budgeted by about £10k.

Development costs were also lower than expected by about £38k in total. CYP activity (£12k under budget), training activities (£10k under budget) and special ministry support (£4k under budget). These were offset by additional spending on Elders Development (£4k) and some new Synod ministry (£1.2k). We also made no use of sums budgeted for any contingency (£5k) and for Welfare grants (£7k).

Discussions are ongoing about possible uses of additional income for extra and new development work in the next few years (derived mainly from assets and proceeds from the sale of closed churches). Figures are not settled but our current prediction is in the region of £1.6 million additional income up to 2030. However, we have already, in the current year, allocated £100k for energy support, £80k to support additional capacity for the Synod and £60k for the Mission Capacity Fund.

Other major potential items are notably a new Wilderness Hub structure for CYP Enablers (possibly £430k over the next five years) and supporting Synod Ministry (around £90k over the next five years). We also now have to consider a major review of our safeguarding structures which may involve an additional expenditure of £50k pa on an ongoing basis from 2024 (discussions are in progress). Our response to the Pensions Challenge also needs continual monitoring.

TARTAN FOREVER

For the rest of this year, the V&A Museum in Dundee has an exhibition on Tartan, its history and significance. Tartan is one of the best known fabrics yet is simple to make, crossing weft threads over warp threads, but a myriad complex patterns or 'setts' are possible. Tartan has always been popular with fashion designers, from traditional to anarchic like Vivienne Westwood, and has often carried political messages.

In 2025, a tartan grid will form the basis for a new garden at V&A Dundee, created with the Eden Project. This will feature plants used for dyeing yarns before the 19th-century advent of aniline dyes, from ragweed (to create orange) and dandelion (magenta) to sloe (blue-black) and rock lichen (red). Pre-1820, most tartans were "district tartans" based on the natural resources available nearby. The notion of ancient 'clan tartans' was apparently a 19th century sales pitch - one of the many myths and misconceptions around tartan!

[If anyone visits this exhibition during the year, it would be fascinating to hear about it. Ed.]

Another one to visit:

The Declaration of Arbroath (1320) is one of Scotland's most iconic documents. It dates from the Wars of Independence when the Scots attempted to re-affirm the independence of the kingdom of Scotland against English claims to overlordship. The Declaration is a letter from the barons and the community of the realm of Scotland to Pope John XXII. It is a carefully crafted appeal (in Latin) designed to persuade the Pope to reconsider his approach to the long-running Anglo-Scottish conflict. Despite the victory at Bannockburn 1314, Edward II would not drop his claim and did not recognise Robert I as king of Scotland.

In his reply, the Pope urged reconciliation. After the deposition of Edward II, a treaty was signed in 1328 recognising Robert I as king and Scottish independence. In 1329 a papal bull permitted the anointing and crowning of the king of Scots by the bishop of St Andrews as the Pope's representative. Sadly, the Anglo-Scottish conflict resumed in 1332.

This precious and fragile document is rarely put on public show but will be displayed at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh from 3 June to 2 July this year. Admission is free. 10.00-17.00 daily.