

ST. ANDREWS UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Upper Hanover Street, Sheffield, S3 7RQ

MESSENGER

Price £1.25

February and March 2024



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CALENDAR for February and March 2024

Sun	4 Feb	10.45 am	Rev Jamie Kissack - Communion
Tues	6 Feb	10 am	Community Choir
Wed	7 Feb	2 pm	Elders meeting
Sun	11 Feb	10.45 am	Rev Graham Wassell
Tues	13 Feb		NO Community Choir
Sun	18 Feb	10.45 am	Mrs Jenny Carpenter followed by Church Meeting
Tues	20 Feb	10 am	Community Choir
Thurs	22 Feb	10 am	Management Team meeting
Sun	25 Feb	10.45 am	Mr Chris Limb
Tues	27 Feb	10 am	Community Choir
Sun	3 March	10.45 am	Rev Canon Adrian Alker
Mon	4 March	2 pm	Elders meeting
Wed	6 March	10 am	Health & Safety inspection
	6 March	12 noon	Defibrillator training
Thurs	7 March	5.30 pm	Broomhall Group of Groups
Sat	9 March	10 – 3.30	Yorkshire Synod meeting at Central URC
Sun	10 March	10.45 am	Prof Clyde Binfield
Tues	12 March	10 am	Community Choir
Sun	17 March	10.45 am	Rev Dr Michael Bayle
Tues	19 March	10 am	Community Choir
Thurs	21 March	10 am	Management Team meeting
Sun	24 March	10.45 am	Rev Dr Walter Houston
Tues	26 March	10 am	Community Choir
Fri	29 March	11 am	Good Friday service with Trinity URC
Sun	31 March	10.45 am	Rev dr David Stec – Easter Day Holy Communion
Tues	2 April		NO Community Choir
Sun	7 April	10.45 am	Worship group Sheffield Half Marathon

FLOWERS

We now have a beautiful arrangement of artificial flowers in place for Sunday services but 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, May and September

Sheila Cooke: February, June and October

Jean Dickson: March, July and November

Douglas Jones: August, December and April

COFFEE

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

FAMILY NEWS

We hope that 2024 has started well for you. The year is flying and already we are into Lent and looking to Easter.

Some of our members have been busy with happy family events. **Ian and Sheila Cooke's** grand-daughter Anna was married on 10 February in London at St Martin in the Fields, but first **Linda Callear's** son Christopher was married on 26 January. Our congratulations and best wishes to the happy couples.

Linda writes:

After the dark days of the last couple of months, life is brightening up for me. My son Chris and his partner Sharon were married in Fulham London on 26 1 24.

After a whirlwind of preparations, anxious times over the wedding dress being ready in time, stress over visas regarding guests coming from abroad, including Sharon's parents who were jetting in from Oman, and a complete disaster with the first lot of helium balloons, everything came together on the day. Andrew and I sorted the flowers, Alex and Jackie were in charge of the running buffet and Sam, Sharon's Dad, turned out to be an ace in child-care, in fact a Lego wizard! Marion and Paul came down from Sheffield with lots of extra luggage to sort out Debbie, who had landed in Heathrow Airport from Tasmania at 6 30 am on the morning before the wedding. She was completely jet-lagged and exhausted but insisted on doing all the table decorations and generally giving out good advice.

It was a joyful occasion, with lots of thoughtful touches. All their London friends were there, and we are all looking forward to the official photographs, taken by James, a former flat-mate. These will certainly feature the modes of transport used, i.e. a white Rolls Royce, for the Bride and Groom and a big London Bus for the rest of the merry rabble. We wish them well in their new life together.

Linda Callear



Unfortunately, some of our friends are suffering. **Kathleen Smyth** had a sudden, mysterious and very painful 'episode'; not a heart attack, mercifully, but X-rays finally showed it to be a cracked vertebra. She is now on morphine patches for the very severe pain and trusts it will heal itself with time. Our good wishes and prayers for speedy recovery to Kathleen and to all those who are still suffering from lingering colds and coughs.

We are sorry to report that David Riley, **Christina Stark's** partner, died on 12 January in St Luke's. Our condolences to Christina and to all the family. A Thanksgiving event for him took place at the Norfolk Arms on Saturday 10 February.

We were sorry to say farewell to **Jocelyn**, who has been a charming addition to our congregation during the past year. She has now graduated with distinction and returned to Indonesia. Her parents and brother came over for her



graduation ceremony and we were delighted to see them at St Andrew's. Jocelyn presented us with an *ulos* – a beautiful example of traditional Indonesian fabric – and showed us how it was worn and used as a blessing in a marriage

Billy Aryanto had a trip home to Indonesia in January and very kindly brought back a souvenir for each of us. They are fridge magnets in the design of an animal in traditional batik style.

It is good to hear from friends away at Christmas. **Sarah Hall** sends her greetings to us all and wishes St Andrew's well in 2024.

Unfortunately, her car was written off when another car suddenly backed into her when turning into her church car park. Apart from feeling shaken, Sarah wasn't hurt at all - the impact was very low speed, though none the less damaging for her car. She has now replaced it with a hybrid.

Greetings and love also from **Robert Beard**. He loved having son Joe home for New Year and he recently enjoyed a holiday in Barcelona – a feast of sun and art, particularly the Sagrada Familia Cathedral (see page 14).

His work as a call handler for the NHS 111 service is more and more demanding but we have another update from him (see page 13).

Wilma Love, despite mobility and other health problems, is enjoying her new apartment in a sociable complex near to her daughter and family. She misses her friends at St Andrew's after coming here for such a long time and we thank her for her generous donation.

Margaret and Ian Baxter are still in a sheltered flat in Berkhamsted very close to Susie and family and send greetings to people at St Andrew's who remember them.

Monica Hanna was delighted that the Christmas Eve service on Radio 4 at 8.15am came from her old school in Belfast. You may remember that girls from that school's choir sang at the Coronation last year.

We exchanged Christmas blessings and good wishes with all the other congregations that meet here, and the Bulgarian New Generation Church presented us with a lovely gift of Ferrero Rocher chocolates !

We send our greetings and good wishes to all the members and friends who cannot get to church services, and assure them that they are in our thoughts and prayers. We try to stay in touch with visits and phone calls, and David Stec and your elder will bring home communion if you wish.

Pat Hale in Castlederg is now virtually housebound, but has wonderful carers four times a day because she cannot walk far, and is no longer able to walk the dog or look after her garden, which was her pride and joy before. She enjoys getting the Messenger from time to time and hearing news of St Andrew's.

A few years ago she related this story of her town, Castlederg, where there is an actual castle ruin. She was out walking the dog one day when she found archaeologists digging on the site of the castle, so she stopped to chat with them. They were rather frustrated in their attempts that day to identify remains they had found as their regular bone expert had been off sick. They said they had found something like the bones of a woman and a child. Pat had a look at the bones and was able to suggest that they had the remains of two men and a dog. Having been a lecturer in the zoology department of Sheffield University Pat knew whereof she spoke. The archaeologists were amazed to find an elderly woman out walking her dog who was able to help them with their research and save them a lot of time

LOOKING BACK

Our service of **Holy Communion** on 4 February was led by the Synod Moderator, Rev Jamie Kissack. Older members remember Jamie and his wife Fran when they attended as students in the 1980s. There was quite a contingent of students then with an evening service.

We held a **Church Meeting** after worship on Sunday 18 February to update members on current church business.

DEFIBRILLATOR: We have installed a defibrillator. They have proved to be invaluable in saving lives after a heart attack. We had a training session on the use of a defib, delivered by Yorkshire Ambulance Service, on 6 March, to learn how to use it in an emergency. The device is on the front wall of the church to be visible and easily accessible for community use.

LOOKING AHEAD

GOOD FRIDAY: LENT began on 25 February and we shall hold our Good Friday service on **29 March at 11 am**. Members of Trinity URC will join us as usual and take part in the reading. There will be hot cross buns to follow.

EASTER DAY Communion will be led by the Rev Dr David Stec at 10.45 am as usual.

I AM MARK. The actor Stefan Smart will present a dramatised telling of the whole Gospel of St Mark in the Church on **Friday 21 June at 7pm**. This promises to be a revelatory evening as we hear the story of Jesus as it might have been heard by his early followers. Keep the date, further information next time.

THE WIDER CHURCH

YORKSHIRE SYNOD: The twice-yearly Synod meeting was held in Sheffield at Central URC on Saturday 9 March. Jean Dickson and Elizabeth Draper attended and there will be a report in the next issue.

CONCERT: Sterndale Singers conducted by Robert Webb will present a Choral Meditation for Passiontide at **St Marie's Cathedral on Sunday 24 March at 3 pm.** The programme will include Mass for Four Voices by William Byrd and music by Weelkes, Tallis, Victoria, Bruckner, Lassus and Durufle.

The concert will run without an interval and finish around 4.15pm. Tickets £10, students £5, under-16 free.

Sheffield Symphony Orchestra are playing at High Storrs School on Saturday 23 March at 7.30pm.

Programme:

Soloist: Ben Powell

Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody Number 2;

Beach: Piano Concerto;

Sibelius: Symphony Number 1.

EXHIBITION

'Threads Through Creation'

Sheffield Cathedral hosted a stunning exhibition of twelve embroidered silk panels that explore the story of creation. The scale of the panels and the skill and artistry on display is extraordinary. The panels are huge – 1.5m/8ft high by as much as 4m/13ft wide, each individually crafted using layers of silk, hand-dyed materials, metallic leathers and gold leaf, miles of thread – and more than eight million stitches! The exhibition has been created by textile artist Jacqui Parkinson, who took her inspiration from the poetic verses of Genesis, the first book of the Bible.



BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

Our service on 14 January, led by Rev Canon Adrian Alker, was rather different in format, with more space for prayers and quiet reflection, helped by music. Adrian said:

We might hope and pray for peace – peace between nations, peace within a nation, peace within communities, peace with our neighbours, peace within families. But peace is far more than an abstract idea. Peace, as we know, needs all human beings to work for and to be makers of peace. Peace begins in the human heart, whether that heart belongs to a powerful leader of a nation or each one of us in our work and relationships. That is why we emphasise in this time together peacemakers. Let us think about how we, each one of us, can be an agent of peace and of times when maybe we are not.

Let's begin our reflections where we should in this act of worship, with the scriptures and what they have to teach us. Looking at the Bible as a whole, on the one hand it surely tells of the dream of God for God's world. A world created in love, for love, a world where people and all creation should live in harmony. From a vision of an earthly paradise at the beginning of the Bible to a vision of a heavenly Jerusalem where the leaves of the tree set in the midst are for the healing of the nations. But the bible is also full of nightmares, warring tribes, wicked rulers, unjust practices. Throughout the bible there are those prophets who try to put the dream of God into practice, men like Isaiah and Jeremiah, kings like Solomon and supremely and definitively Jesus the Christ of God.

Psalms 46, like all the psalms reflect this turbulent world with the consistent affirmation or perhaps a hope that God will make wars to cease, that the God of hosts is with us. However, centuries later when Jesus was growing up in Galilee, it seemed that the nightmare was stronger than the dream. The occupying Roman power had overrun the land of Israel and subjugated its people. There was a longing for a Saviour, and if we strip away all the theological wrapping and discover Jesus the human being like you and me, we then find a remarkable peacemaker, so remarkable that the Roman power and indeed the religious establishment of his day could not cope with the radicality of Jesus' message and had him executed.

If you are in any doubt about the ferocity of the passion of Jesus' concern for the world and the need for change, all you have to do is to read through the whole of the so-called Sermon on the Mount from the beginning of chapter 5, which we heard today, through to the end of chapter 7.

Peacemakers: Who would

Blessed are the peacemakers. Turn the other cheek. Do unto others as you would have them do to you. Do not judge so that you may not be judged. The whole of Jesus's life, actions and teachings have a hugely strict sense of morality. Jesus Christ is raging, raging in the streets. Let's not spend all our time singing about sweet Jesus, meek and mild Jesus, sitting in heaven at the right hand of God. Let's remember the Jesus who is healing in the street, who cures those who suffer.

And it is this sense of following our supreme Peacemaker that people across the world, not all of the Christian faith of course, have tried to be peacemakers and have inspired us.

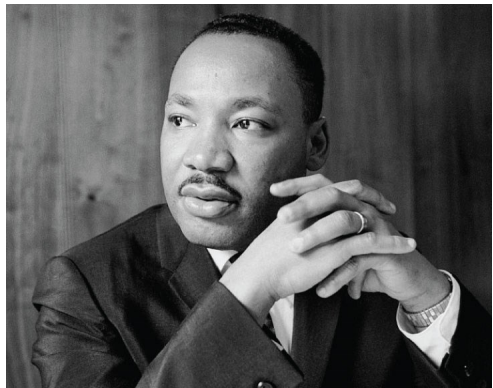
We then looked at the pictures of 12 peacemakers and, in pairs, decided which we would most like to meet, if they were still alive, and what is it about the chosen person which inspires us. A thoughtful discussion ensued.



Mikhail Gorbachev



Archbishop Desmond Tutu



Martin Luther King

you most like to meet? Why?



Nelson Mandela



Yocheved Lifshitz

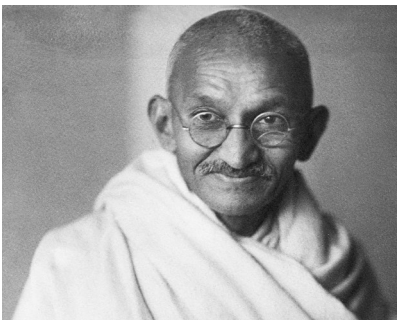
Released from hostage by Hamas



Narges Mohammadi
Iranian peace activist



Archbishop Oscar Romero



Mahatma Gandhi



Malala Yousafzai

FAREWELL: On Sunday 28 January, the Rev Sue Hammersley, vicar of St Mark's, led her last services in that church, as she is moving on. The church marked her departure with many tributes and thanks after more than ten years of devoted ministry. A book of photos, farewell cards and wishes, and speeches, were given at a lunch (attended by Jean Dickson).

St Andrew's is very sorry to see Sue go. We have benefitted from her inspiring gifts and personality in Churches Together in Broomhill and Broomhall (CTBB), the Broomhall Breakfast, the Group of Groups, and leading worship for us on some Christmas Day and other services. She has made a huge contribution to her church and community and we wish her all the best for the future.

HOSPITAL SUNDAY 27th January 2024

Elizabeth Draper and I went to the Jewish Synagogue for their Civic service on what was formerly called Hospital Sunday. The service started at 3:00 pm and I was amazed by the interior of the Synagogue. In the Jewish tradition the men and women sit separately. I was pleased to sit beside Anne Hunter whom I taught with at Birkdale. Her husband, a vicar, has preached at St Andrews. The service leaflet read from right to left. All the singing was done by the Rabbi who fortunately had a good voice. Some parts of the service were in English which we joined in - all well-known Old Testament passages. At a special part of the service, the Arc of the Covenant was revealed, a fantastic display of silver. The Rabbi gave a very entertaining sermon; he is famous for his jokes and did not disappoint.

At the end of the service a collection was taken for the hospital. We then moved into the hall for a sumptuous high tea. The Lord Mayor and Master Cutler both made speeches. I was pleased that the Lord Mayor mentioned the imprisonment of Mary Queen of Scots in Sheffield as part of Sheffield's history. The Master Cutler extolled the careers in manufacturing in and around Sheffield. £6000 was raised for the hospital, an excellent result.

Sheila Dunstan

END OF THE LINE 6

As everyone in England must be aware, the NHS currently faces desperate staffing and financial challenges, and our 111 call-centre is as vulnerable as any other part of the service. One simple example is the increase in the National Minimum Wage: although this is a government requirement, no additional funding is being provided to finance it, and so not-for-profit companies like Herts Urgent Care are having to extract money – around £1,000,000 in our case – from existing budgets, which naturally has implications for service provision.

The dearth of doctors, nurses and paramedics – and the money to pay them – often results in breaches to our target waiting-times for patients expecting return calls from clinicians. We have therefore developed a system of ‘comfort calling’, and I was asked to take on this role. My job is to review the clinical queues and phone patients who have had to wait longer than we should like, apologise for the delay and ask about any changes to their conditions which might require an escalated response.

I steeled myself to talk with lots of frustrated and angry patients, but was relieved to find that the overwhelming majority are glad simply to know that they are not forgotten. Moreover, freed from the rather rigid symptom assessment questionnaire, I now find myself having more pastoral conversations with patients, reassuring them that they are cared for and trying to sow seeds of hope in often emotionally as well as physically painful situations. It seems that ‘ministering’ will follow me wherever I go and whatever I do.

Shortly before last Christmas, Herts Urgent Care’s Chief Executive David Archer visited our NHS 111 call-centre in Peterborough. This was not a ‘photo op’, but a real chance for us to talk with him about our experiences working with HUC. Brazen as usual, I took the opportunity to share my concerns about our engagement with members of the public and how it might be improved, in order to reduce delays to the care of patients.

Specifically, I think we need to be clearer about the purpose of the NHS 111 service. People seem generally aware that they can phone 111 for help with medical issues which are not life-threatening; but we are failing to communicate clearly that our primary role is to assess patients’ symptoms, eliminate more serious medical conditions, and refer them to an appropriate level of care, such as the ambulance service, a mental health crisis team, a minor injuries unit, or a doctor, dental nurse or pharmacist.

Because our role is not adequately explained to the public, we too often receive calls from people enquiring about hospital transport, pharmacy deliveries, medical services abroad or other matters outside our remit. Furthermore, as an assessment service, we are not able to help a caller who is not in the same room as the patient; neither are we able to respond to someone who is on the move, in case something unexpected happens and we need to send help to their location.

In January, I was invited to an online meeting with our Head of Engagement Vicki Bean, in which I outlined some ideas I have for how the above concerns might be addressed, in order to reduce our time spent on wasted calls and thereby decrease delays to patient care. I described my work in interfaith training and democratic involvement, and my involvement in local Church study and community outreach, and offered to work with the team revising HUC's public engagement initiatives. I'm eagerly awaiting a response!

Robert Beard



The Sagrada Familia Cathedral

LECTIONARY READINGS for February 2024

February 4	Isaiah 40 :21-31; Psalm 147 :1-11, 20c; 1 Corinthians 9 :16-23; Mark 1 :29-39
February 11	3 Kings 2 :1-12; Psalm 50 :1-6; 2 Corinthians 4 :3-6; Mark 9 :2-9
February 18	Genesis 9 :8-17; Psalm 25 : 1-10; LENT 1 Peter 3 :18-22; Mark 1 :9-15
February 25	Genesis 17 :1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22 :23-31; Romans 4 :13-25; Mark 8 :31-38 or Mark 9 :2-9
March 3	Exodus 20 :1-7; Psalm 19 ; 1 Corinthians 1 :18-25; John 2 :13-22
March 10	Numbers 21 : 4-9; Psalm 107 : 1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2 : 1-10; John 3 : 14-21
March 17	Jeremiah 31 : 31-34; Psalm 51 : 1-12 OR Psalm 119 : 9-16; Hebrews 5 : 5-10; John 12 : 20-33
March 24	PALM: Psalm 118 : 1-2, 19-29; Mark 11 : 1-11 OR John 12: 12-16; PASSION Isaiah 50 : 4-9a; Psalm 31 : 9-16; Philippians 2 : 5-11; Mark 14 :1-15: 47 OR Mark 15 : 1-39
March 31	Acts 10 : 34-43; OR Isaiah 25 : 6-9; Psalm 118 : 1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15 : 1-11 OR Act 10 : 34-43; John 20 : 1-18 OR Mark 16 : 1-8

POSTAGE STAMPS

Have you had to go to the Royal Mail sorting office and collect letters when insufficient postage has been paid. This wasn't too much of a problem previously, when it cost around £1.50 to retrieve the letter, but now that cost has increased to £5 per item - a big increase.

Also, please be aware that there are some stamps in circulation that are not recognised by Royal Mail and again, if used, post will not be delivered unless retrieved at the sorting office and a fee of £5 paid. Royal Mail says these are usually stamps bought online from scam companies and not official Royal Mail recognised sites. They look almost identical to the regular ones but when scanned at the sorting office they are rejected. If you are buying online and see that the prices are significantly cheaper than what you would pay at the Post Office, then they are likely not to be genuine and any correspondence you send out using them may not get to its destination unless the recipient goes and pays the fee and retrieves it themselves.

RSPB BIRD WATCH

If you took part in the RSPB's annual survey on the weekend of 26-28 January, it would be interesting to hear what you spotted in your garden, especially big numbers or unusual species.

Lines Written in March :

The cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one;
Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The plough boy is whooping –anon-anon;
There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The winter is over and gone.

William Wordsworth

