

CONTACT

February 2022



**The monthly magazine of
Annan United Reformed Church**



ANNAN URC SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

Service List

| Date | Event | Leader |
|---------|------------------------------|---|
| 30/1/22 | Service | Nan Maxwell / (Sermon - Revd Paul Whittle, Synod Moderator, Video from URC service) |
| 06/2/22 | Communion Service | Lesley Richmond |
| 13/2/22 | Service | Lesley Richmond |
| 20/2/22 | Service with Fellowship Time | Revd Haydn Higon |
| 27/2/22 | Service | Nan Maxwell |

CONTACT INFORMATION

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|----------------------|---|
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Magazine

Please note items for the March issue of Contact Magazine should reach Judith by Monday 21st February

Church Finances

You will know that pandemic has had a big impact on the church in many ways – services and events cancelled and then restricted; organisations not able to meet; and fund-raising events no longer possible.

This has had a serious impact on church finances and accelerated an already worrying pre-pandemic fall in church income.

In round number terms regular income for the past few years has been as follows :-

| Year | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|
| Regular Income | £46K | £38K | £25K | £21K |

These figures do not include a manse net income of approximately £4k per annum which while not to be used for general expenses has enabled us over this period to upgrade our A/V facilities and refurbish the hall without drawing on church reserves.

The reduction in income has forced us to use our reserves to meet our normal operating costs:-

| Year | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Operating and reserve funds | £20K | £23K | 21K | £14k |

The cost of the church refurbishment had reduced church reserves but by 2019 we had almost reached our target of restoring a reserve fund of £20k in compliance with trusteeship guidelines and creating an operating fund of £4k. Sadly, by the end of 2021 our reserves have fallen to £8k less than the OSCR guidelines and our operating fund is ~£2k below our preferred budget figure. Now it is only by the existence of the legacy from the Dumfries church that we are not in breach of charity regulations.

There is some positive news of groups starting to use the hall again which we hope will provide some additional income this year Covid permitting. A negotiated reduction in our M&M contribution will also be helpful for the next twelve months. However, as we look forward to 2022, we are faced with news of greatly increased energy bills for the church and hall and an expensive roof repair due to be carried out this spring. **Clearly the church needs to consider how to restore our reserves in the short term and become more financially sustainable if the church is to have a future.**

ATTITUDES

So much has changed over the last two years, it may be helpful if we take time to consider our attitudes about ourselves and towards other people. We have put up with restrictions, limited travelling, conversations and pursuing our interests and hobbies.

The way in which fellow citizens in the world have been and are being treated is shameful and embarrassing, and sometimes this happens in our own community too. Bonds binding community activities have weakened and the same is true of the church family and the witness of churches working together in the community. Amid the problems and divisions there are temptations to simply walk away.

However, if we take a positive attitude to the changes we all face – if we support and encourage rather than criticize and deride we can start strengthening the bonds of living and working together. In the early church the New Testament tells us that the Christians met together, ate together, learnt together, worshipped together, shared their possessions and witnessed together.

This sort of attitude took commitment and effort, and if we are to walk the way of Jesus it's best done together as we try to establish priorities and work and pray to achieve them. Our attitudes are important – let us not be dictatorial but helpful, understanding, encouraging whatever initiatives help spread the love of God.

Haydn Higton

Having kept a variety of cage and aviary birds for many years, which are well fed and looked after.

The following words remind myself and others to feed the wild birds that visit our gardens

Feed the Birds



I feed the birds that visit my garden on their way
With peanuts and with fat balls, I encourage them to stay
I leave a bowl of water; they drink and bath and play
And have fun with each other, in the most delightful way
It cheers me up to watch them, and wonder as I stand
How many fledglings have they fed? Do they like this helping hand?
So I'll continue feeding, stocking up their favourite snack
Enjoying my small feathered friends—enchanted they come back!



Our Fragile World

Experts estimate that climate change could push an additional 132 million people into poverty in the next ten years unless action is taken. Covid 19 threatens health and economic development gains and has led to the first rise in extreme poverty in a generation and many people have to live on £1.00 a day.

Whilst Britain is among the world's most generous donor countries our overseas aid budget was cut by £4 billion last year. There's 771 million people without access to clean water, 1.7 billion have no decent toilets and 2.3 billion who lack soap and water to wash at home

Fairtrade Fortnight is from February 21st until March 6th - let's concentrate our response to issues of poverty, homelessness, hunger, debt and other reasons that damage people's lives and the environment. Support for Christian Aid through the U.R.C. Commitment for Life is more important now as part of our own programme to assist the first U.N. Sustainable Development Goal which is "to end poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030".

Rick Warren wrote "Christianity is not a religion or philosophy, but a relationship and lifestyle the core of which is thinking of others, as Jesus did, instead of ourselves".

Haydn Higon

Floral Art is once again starting on a monthly basis from February. Knit and Natter will take place in one area of the hall and Flora Art in another. If you would like to come along for either activity you will be most welcome.

FLORAL ART CLASS IN UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL

TUESDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2022 FROM 10.00 – 12 NOON

AN ALL GREEN WINTER CONTINENTAL STYLE

MECHANICS

Large flower foam tray (available to borrow or buy at class)

One block of flower foam (available to purchase at class)

Pot tape

Scissors

MATERIALS

Greenery:- A selection of foliage that is available in winter. For example evergreen garden material, ivy with or without berries, holly, conifer, seed heads, dried bracken if you can find any, grasses, twigs, birch branches, cone, bark, moss, interesting shaped pieces of wood, not huge, remember scale and balance.

If you would like to add flowers, go ahead. You will usually need three different varieties. Don't buy large headed blooms. In this design I think one variety of flower placed through the design would look really good. It is your design and your choice.

ooOoo

BECAUSE OF COVID WE WILL NOT HAVE BISCUITS, TEA OR COFFEE. IF YOU WISH YOU ARE WELCOME TO BRING YOUR OWN.

MASKS TO BE WORN ENTERING THE BUILDING AND WALKING AROUND CLASS. YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO WEAR MASKS AT YOUR WORK TABLE.

IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF YOU COULD BRING A RUBBISH BAG AND TAKE ANY CUTTINGS HOME WITH YOU.