

CONTACT

August 2023



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



WEEKLY WORSHIP AT ANNAN URC
MORNING SERVICES 11:00 AM

Please note on **Sunday 30th July:**
the **Annan Churches Together Holiday Club Service** at Hecklegirth School is at **11:15am**

Sunday 6th August: **Communion Service** **Rev Nick Mark**

Welcomer: L Highton
Bible Reading: R Richardson
Intercessions: H Highton

Sunday 13th August: **Morning Service** **Mrs Marilyn Parkes-Seddon**

Welcomer: R Richardson
Bible Reading: H Highton
Intercessions: H McNairn

Sunday 20th August: **Fellowship Time** **Rev Haydn Highton**

Welcomer: M Kerr
Bible Reading: H McNairn
Intercessions: D Maxwell

Sunday 27th August: **Morning Service** **David Townsend with Rev Nick Mark**

Welcomer: A Foster
Bible Reading: E Woodman
Intercessions: M Kerr

Note to Readers and Prayers: visiting Service Leaders have the option to choose their own theme and readings, and may wish to lead prayers themselves.
Such information will be given to you as soon as possible.

CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

Church Website	www.annanurc.chessck.co.uk	
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Items for September magazine should reach Ruth by Wednesday 23rd August, please

INTERIM MINISTER'S LETTER AUGUST 2023

Dear Friends,

The world we live in seems to be challenged in so many ways. At the time of writing this I am glad I have not invested in an expensive holiday in Italy as I cannot tolerate extreme temperatures. My discomfort though is irrelevant when we think of how soaring temperatures caused by climate change are destroying lives and livelihoods. Then we have the escalating war in Ukraine and the volatile situation in Palestine and Israel. August is also the month when we are reminded of the 109th anniversary of the start of the First World War when Germany declared war on France. It seems sometimes how little we have learned in those 109 years. The war in Ukraine has many similarities with the horrors of World War One. When you consider that Russia has lost already 50,000 men, the human implications hit home. The use of cluster bombs by both sides can only accentuate casualties. There are those who see in all that is going on signs that the end of the world is nigh. I don't myself go along those lines but would readily accept that every living human being on our planet needs to refocus their lives with God's help.

Where is God in all this people ask? God is suffering with all of us because for many people sadly they cannot accept any blame or responsibility for our present state of affairs because it is so much easier to pick a scapegoat and that makes them feel better.

Our Gospel readings during August come from Matthew's Gospel and help us to really focus on where we should place God in our lives. On the 6th August in the feeding of the five thousand we see Jesus emphasising compassion through hospitality. On the 13th August in the incident of Jesus walking on water we are reminded that Jesus is with us in the stormy times of life if we let him into our life. The 20th August brings the story of the unclean woman and reminds us that as Christians the marginalised and the excluded need to be remembered and helped. The 27th August reminds us to think about how Jesus as the Son of God can and does make a difference in our lives if only we can show confidence in our Saviour.

For many people Jesus or God are a last resort, not the first port of call when we have an issue to cope with. That can be understandable if you look at the situation in Ukraine where the Christian Church in its different denominations appears to support both sides! If we think about it carefully though, God cares for everyone even when that person is doing something ungodly. God weeps with all who suffer even if they have brought that suffering on themselves.

Each one of us is made in God's image but sadly we so often fight God because we decide what we want for our own interests not those of God. We also want God to fit our own image and wishes. As I grow older I suppose I realise how important it is that we trust in God and listen for God rather than try to mould God into fitting into our own created life plan.

With every blessing

Nick Mark

FROM THE EDITOR

On behalf of us all, I express our thanks and appreciation for Judith's time as editor of Contact magazine. I also thank her personally for the kindness and efficiency with which she made it possible for me to take on the role when she has had to give up at such a sad and difficult time, making it so much easier for me than it might have been.

Remember that this is your magazine! Please think what you would like to share with others and send it to me, by email if possible. The closing date is declared in each preceding issue, but it is always helpful to receive contributions earlier, and essential if they are printed or hand-written items requiring transcribing. We look forward to reading about your individual and group thoughts and activities, be they reports of what you have done, or news of intended projects.

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## **WILL YOU?**

It is often said if something needs doing look for a busy person and ask them to help. Our church family needs volunteers to be part of the rota to welcome folk into the building, to read in services etc, etc. If you will be a willing volunteer please speak to Haydn before the next rota is prepared at the end of this month.

*Haydn Higton*

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ARE YOU AN ANYBODY?

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Everybody could have done.

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## **THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH**

The revelation of God pulls our lives together.

The signposts of God are clear and point out the right road.

The directions of God are plain and easy on the eyes.

*Psalm 19*

## **DEATHS**

We are sad to record the recent death of  
John Stannard of Seaforth Gardens, Annan.

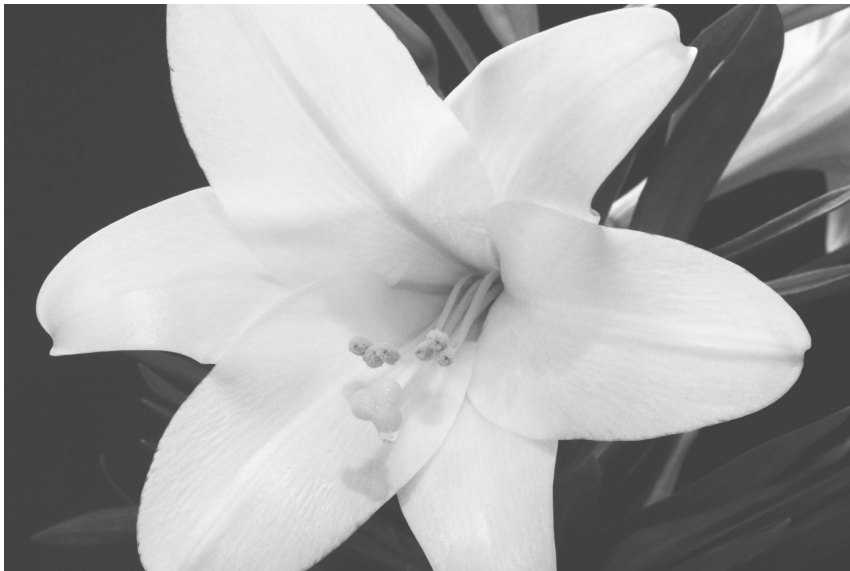
John was a member of this church, a friend to many  
and a willing servant of the Gospel.

He will be greatly missed by the church family.

We give thanks for his life and offer our sincere condolences  
to his wife Judith and their family.

We also record the recent death of  
Mr John Woodhouse of Fruids Park Avenue, Annan

We give thanks for his life  
and offer our sincere condolences to his family.



## A QUIET SABBATH DAY

A little Sunday luxury  
Begins with toast and tea,  
Perhaps a Sunday newspaper –  
The cheerful bits for me!  
All this quite leisurely, of course,  
No rushing here or there,  
With time to watch the clouds drift by  
And time to stand and stare.

Perhaps the chance to take a stroll  
As evening comes along,  
To feel relaxed, a sense of peace,  
And in our hearts a song.  
The weekend swiftly slips away.  
Too soon it will be Monday,  
But we have shared a special gift –  
The luxury of Sunday.

*Church Gardener*



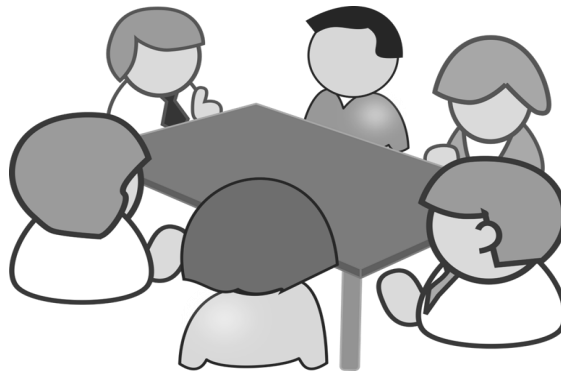
## **HOW DO WE REACH OUT?**

Some months ago, Reform Magazine ran an article about Community Project Awards and how the URC at Roker in Sunderland had followed advice and planning by a Church-Related Community Worker. She suggested that the church, which has 24 members, develop links with trusted partners – local enterprises that were trying to help the community too.

These partners included Social Chef, which helps people improve their well-being through food-based activities and improved diet and also Waste Not workshops aimed at reducing household waste. Another partner runs activities combatting social isolation, including exercise classes for people with long-term health conditions and disabilities and a craft class. All these build relationships with and between people in the local community.

As a result of these partnerships growing the different organisations and activities work together in the church building which offers a warm space. An Elder at Roker believes their experience shows smaller churches how to have a bigger impact - a partnership with like-minded people could be beneficial for the community. He says our building is a place people want to come to. So make use of it and work with the right people to deliver. Don't think you've got to do it on your own.

*Haydn Higton*



## **HOW FORTUNATE WE ARE**

In January this year a Parliamentary Report on East Africa estimated that over thirty-six million people there were suffering from hunger because of the drought. In May the Telegraph reported that one person would die of hunger every 28 seconds by July. A population the size of that of the UK is starving.

Does this put our difficulties into perspective?

## TO NATURE

How wonderful Dame Nature is and kind  
Wafting sweet odours on the summer wind  
Sweet smells assail the senses everywhere  
Banishing dull fear and duller care  
Surely the smell of flowers in fullest bloom  
Dispels the shades of darkness and of gloom  
Brings to the earth a glory all its own  
And to my heart a peace it's never known.  
Oh could summer but with us always stay  
And winter be with us for but a day  
How wonderful and glorious t'would seem  
But then I fear alas 'tis but a dream  
Dame Nature in her wisdom has decreed  
That four Seasons a year the world doth need  
To bring unto a head its crowning hour  
When on us all its blessings it does shower  
Therefore we mortals must remain content  
With getting things in order as they're sent.

*Norman Graham-Barnett*

*We thank Helen McNairn for sharing her father's poem with us.*

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For every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3



Annan URC – Girls' Brigade Company

The 1st Annan Girls' Brigade Company marked the end of their first full session since Covid with their annual awards evening in church. The girls (together with their parents and friends) were welcomed by the Rev'd Nick Mark, our interim moderator.

The girls entertained their guests with a range of sketches and a specially arranged dance routine. They were presented with their badges and certificates for the year's activities.

It is good to see the company in such good heart after lockdown, with an attendance of 25 girls and with an additional two volunteers becoming leaders - one of whom has just completed their training with the brigade and the other currently undertaking the training.



The start of the Company's new 2023/2024 session will be Thursday 24th August at 6.00pm, when we will be holding a registration night.

Kevin Higton



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