

# CONTACT

**November 2023**



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



**NOVEMBER 2023 WORSHIP AT ANNAN URC**  
**MORNING SERVICES 11:00 AM**

**Sunday 5th:**                      **Morning Service with Communion**                      **David Townsend**

Welcomer:                      Helen McNairn

Bible Reading:                      Ruth Mitchell

Intercessions:                      Nan Maxwell

**Sunday 12th:**                      **Remembrance Service**                      **David Townsend and Revd Nick Mark**

Welcomer:                      Robin Richardson

Bible Reading:                      Doug Maxwell

Intercessions:                      Marion Kerr

**Sunday 19th:**                      **Morning Service**                      **Mrs Marilyn Parkes Seddon**

Welcomer:                      Marion Kerr

Bible Reading:                      Edith Woodman

Intercessions:                      Ruth Mitchell

**Sunday 26th:**                      **Morning Service**                      **Mrs Rosalind Fearon**

Welcomer:                      Anne Foster

Bible Reading:                      Robert Mitchell

Intercessions:                      Haydn Highton

*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](http://www.annanurc.chessck.co.uk)

Church Facebook                      Annan URC

Church Email                      [annanurc@gmail.com](mailto:annanurc@gmail.com)

Church Administrator                      Doug Maxwell    01387 249300

Magazine Editor                      [ruthmitchell821@btinternet.com](mailto:ruthmitchell821@btinternet.com)                      01461 201450

*Items for December magazine should reach Ruth by Friday 17th November, please*

## **INTERIM MODERATOR'S NOVEMBER 2023 LETTER**

Dear Friends,

I begin with a message of sincere thanks to all who participated in some shape or form in our Open Church Sunday in September. At the time of writing this both Elders and Church Meeting have not had a chance yet to reflect on how this went and on how we can develop it in future months. We certainly had a much larger congregation that day but numbers are by no means the only result to seek.

This month sees a crucial date in the church calendar, and indeed in the Nation's calendar, namely Remembrance Sunday on the 12<sup>th</sup>. This will be slightly different from a normal Sunday with some of us taking part in the Town Remembrance Service and then returning to the Church to be joined by members of the Royal British Legion and others. David Townsend will be in church to cover the members of Church who either cannot or do not wish to participate in the Parade and will lead Prayers and observe the Two Minute Silence at 11.00am, and other matters, and I will continue the Service on my return from the Parade. It is always a difficult day for so many people, but it is in my mind a key day for the Church to be involved in whatever our views are on the subject of conflict. I approach the subject from two angles. First of all, God suffers with everyone on whatever side in war. Secondly, Remembrance is not about the glorification of war but about remembering those who died and those who have life changing injuries as a result of defending the cause of freedom. Not only that, it is about remembering the non combatants whose lives were irrevocably changed by war. Remembrance Sunday is to my mind a crucial reminder to all of us of the freedoms our armed services continue to protect, and one of those freedoms is of course the right of freedom of worship which had we lost the Second World War would have been severely curtailed.

On the other Sundays in November, the Gospel of Matthew continues to be the chosen Gospel for study. On 5<sup>th</sup> November the Gospel passage Matthew 23 verses 1-12 looks at the challenging issue of practicing what we preach. On 19<sup>th</sup> November, in studying Matthew 25 verses 14-30, the Parable of the Talents is a lesson in utilising the skills that God has given us for the benefit of humankind. Then on 26<sup>th</sup> November in looking at Matthew 25 verses 31-46 we look at the story of the separation of sheep from goats. That Sunday is of course known as Christ The King when we reach the end of the lectionary for the Church Year. That Sunday gives us an opportunity to both look back and to look forward. December of course marks the start of a new Church Year and of studying the Gospel of Mark, and it of course signifies the beginning of Advent.

It would be most remiss of me not to comment in some way on the situation both in the Middle East and Ukraine where war is an actuality not just something in the future. Our prayers need to be directed towards changing hearts and minds to seek peace, because the futility of war has been amply demonstrated over the years, and very bluntly by the kind of weapons of destruction we now see in use. Sometimes prayer seems futile, but I genuinely believe it is not and that prayers are answered. It was prayer for example that eventually resulted in the peace we have in Northern Ireland.

With every blessing

Nick Mark.

## **NOT AGAIN!**

In a month when we remember the horrors and suffering of two World Wars and other conflicts, all the destruction, death and confusion in the Middle East fills our television screens and newspapers. In some cases, the reports are biased to support one view or another, but what comes through is the utter futility of using more and more sophisticated weapons by all sides.

The conflict involving Muslims, Christians and Jews is political and religious, but there are people of peace on all sides who try to understand each other's point of view - to overcome injustice with peaceful protest – to bring healing rather than hate – to overcome prejudice with understanding.

There are no easy answers, but learning together in school, living together in shared communities, listening to people of peace on both sides who cross the divide and understand their so-called opposition. Let us pray that the peace we emphasize at Christmas may become more apparent so that hope comes into all our lives.

*Haydn Higon*

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The following prayer and quote relate to the current conflict in the middle East and to our thoughts on Remembrance Day - *suggested by David Townsend*.

**Living God, we pray for all the people in Israel/Palestine,  
that they may discover the courage and humility to build peace  
together and that they will seek a just path of reconciliation.**

**For our Muslim brothers and sisters in Israel/Palestine this day,  
we pray "Assalamu Alaikum".**

**For our Jewish brothers and sisters in Israel/Palestine this day,  
we pray "Shalom Aleichem".**

**For our Christian brothers and sisters in Israel/Palestine, this  
day, we pray "The Peace of Christ". Amen.**

*Revd. Richard Cattley, retired Anglican Priest*

Peacemaking doesn't mean passivity. It is the act of interrupting injustice without mirroring injustice, the act of disarming evil without destroying the evildoer, the act of finding a third way that is neither fight nor flight but the careful, arduous pursuit of reconciliation and justice. It is about a revolution of love that is big enough to set both the oppressed and the oppressors free.

*Shane Claiborne, Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals*

## REMEMBRANCE



The Kohima Epitaph is the epitaph engraved on the Memorial of the 2nd British Division in the cemetery of Kohima (North-East India). It reads:

'When You Go Home, Tell Them Of Us And Say,  
For Your Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today.'

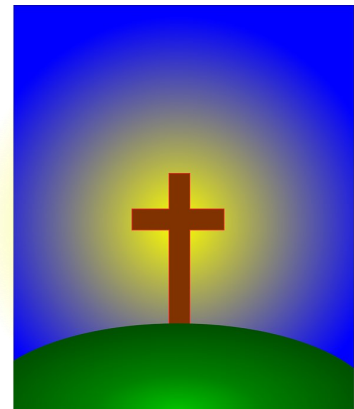
The verse is attributed to John Maxwell Edmonds (1875-1958), and is thought to have been inspired by the epitaph written by Simonides of Ceos to honour the Greeks who fell at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480BC.

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## LEST WE FORGET

The tumult and the shouting dies.  
The captains and the kings depart.  
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice.  
An humble and a contrite heart.  
Lord God of hosts be with us yet.  
Lest we forget, Lest we forget,

*Rudyard Kipling, Recessional v2*



Deuteronomy 6:12: 'Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.' So 'lest thou forget' became the more collective 'lest we forget', with Kipling exhorting his fellow man to remember God's sacrifice and teaching while Britain is off conquering the world.

*Ruth Mitchell, reflection*

Karen Campbell, the URC's Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries, spoke at a recent synod meeting, and with a focus on Black History Month, she shared her poem:

### **BLACK**

If the night sky wasn't inky  
Could the stars shine so bright?  
And if there wasn't darkness,  
Tell me, how could light be light?

No dark depths of earth –  
How would the flora grow?  
Black is essential, don't you know.

You tell me black is no good –  
The shade of evil, shade of sin;  
How do I then make sense  
Of the blackness of my skin?

The skin I didn't choose  
No more than you could choose your own;  
The skin that I was gifted –  
Only skin I've ever known.

Black is what I am; it's who I am;  
It is my pride.  
It's the strength on which I stand  
Where I refuse to be denied.

Black speaks of where I'm going –  
How the world relates to me;  
Black speaks of where I've come from –  
Heritage and history.

But it's hard not to internalise  
The message all around –  
Before a word is spoken  
That in Black offence is found;

Explicit or implied.  
Yet from your view you cannot see  
The shackles to be broken  
Until Black lives full and free.

© Karen Campbell



## **APPEAL**

The Christmas Appeal from Christian Aid this year will highlight the plight of women in Bangladesh – in Kurigram, which is a disaster-prone area affected by cyclone and flooding. We are asked to have a special event during Advent to raise funds for the Appeal. What do you think our church family can do to help?

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## **OPEN CHURCH**

Your views will be sought at the next Church Meeting, but it reminds me of a motto we used in the past – “Each one bring one”. If we could apply this now to raise donations for the Food Bank, it would boost our efforts each month. Each time you come, will you bring a tin or a package of food to help folk who are struggling to survive in Annan?



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## **THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH 1**

Roll up your sleeves – work for God by showing His love and your problems will diminish.

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## **THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH 2**

I always imagined when I was a kid that adults had some kind of inner toolbox full of shiny tools: the saw of discernment, the hammer of wisdom, the sandpaper of patience. But then when I grew up I found that life handed you these rusty bent old tools: friendships, prayer, conscience, honesty - and said, “Do your best with these, they will have to do.” And mostly, against all odds, they're enough.

*Anne Lamott, US writer, Traveling Mercies*



## **WINTRY NOVEMBER**

Wintry November has come round to stay.  
Don't worry that it will bring dark dreary days.  
Perhaps like the fifth there'll be fireworks and sparks,  
Excitement and colour to brighten our hearts.  
A dull day or one with a crisp, cold bright sun -  
A day for reflection or one filled with fun.  
We can't ever know what tomorrow will bring -  
A sorrow, or a joy that will make our soul sing.  
Live life to the full and don't worry ahead  
"For I'm with you always" our Lord Jesus said.

*Church Gardener*



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## **WOOPS!**

"Have another piece of grace, your cake"  
*The Bishop of Coventry - offering a slice to the Archbishop of Canterbury.*



## **NOVEMBER 2023 AND ONWARDS DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Thu 2nd	Girl's Brigade 6:00pm (each Thursday in term time)
Sun 5th	Communion Service 11:00am
Mon 6th	7th Annan Brownies & Guides 6:00pm-9:00pm (each Monday in term time)
Tue 7th	Rainbow Tribe from 5:30pm & Spectrum from 7:30pm (each Tuesday in term time)
Thu 9th	Soup & Sweet Lunch 11.30am -1.30pm in hall
Sun 12th	Remembrance Sunday. EITHER meet at the war memorial for the Town Remembrance Service OR gather before 11:00am at the URC for the Two Minute Silence
Fri 17th	Deadline for items for December Contact Magazine
Sun 19th	Morning Service 11:00am
Sun 26th	Morning Service 11:00am
DECEMBER	
Sun 3rd	Communion Service 11:00am with Quarterly Church Meeting after service
Sun10th	Morning Service 11:00am
Thu 14th	Soup & Sweet Lunch 11:30am -1:30pm in hall
Sun 17th	Morning Service 11:00am
Fri 22nd	Schools finish for Christmas holiday
Sun 24th	Carol Service 11:00 am followed by mince pies and mulled wine
Sun 31st	Hogmanay Morning Service 11:00am
JANUARY	
Tue 9th	School term begins
Thu 11th	Soup & Sweet Lunch 11:30am -1:30pm in hall