

CONTACT

July 2022



The monthly magazine of
Annan United Reformed Church



July Services

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|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 03/07/2022 | Communion | Revd. Nick Mark |
| 10/07//2022 | Service | Revd. Haydn Higton |
| 17/07/2022 | | TBA |
| 24/07/2022 | Service | Lesley Richmond |
| 31/07/2022 | Service | Revd. Nick Mark |

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Items for the August Magazine should reach Judith by 25th July.

Thought for the Month

A former chief Rabbi (Sir Jonathan Sacks) said:

“Today Britain is home to many faiths, but I hope it doesn’t lose its own – the Christian faith that inspires its greatest poetry, its architecture and its bravest battles in defence of freedom”

OUTREACH

On opening the morning post when writing this contribution my attention was drawn to the latest Newsletter from our MSP Oliver Mundell and it contains a very depressing picture of Annan's Central Hotel all boarded up together with an accompanying article on Mr Mundell's efforts to move forward with repairs.

The idea of moving forward understandably formed a large topic for discussion at the AGM on the 19th of June and it was a real joy to serve in a church where there was good and positive debate on what had been done during the time of the previous two Ministers. Every traditional Church worth its salt is looking at how to reach out in the communities it serves because although every church claims to be welcoming they are finding less people to welcome for all sorts of reasons. Gone is the day when someone is called to higher service that another young couple or family comes along to fill that void.

Our Sunday service led by Nan Maxwell got us all thinking about the practical work that Jesus did in the communities he was preaching in during his earthly ministry to heal a damaged and divided world. It got me thinking about a very simple definition of outreach framed by Robert Warren in 1995. He wrote: *A missionary congregation is a church which takes its identity, priorities and agenda, from participation in God's mission in the world.*

Unlike the Annan Central Hotel we have beautifully manicured gardens and a building in great shape but the point was made very firmly at the meeting that the Church is the people and not the building. A great deal of work has already been done to enable the church, if it chooses to, to appoint a paid outreach worker to get to the parts of the Annan Community who probably wouldn't identify with or even dream of attending Annan URC or for that matter any other mainstream Church.

It would be easy to appoint someone but if that individual is to have any chance of success with God's help they will need guidance on the avenues to explore. At our AGM we agreed to set up an Outreach Group which will have its first meeting on Monday 15th August at 7pm. That group will comprise representatives from not just our Eldership but the Catering group, Knit and Natter and Church users like the Brownies to explore how we can do something in the Annan Community at large.

It was emphasised that we should not wholly fund this from our own resources but seek grants from other organisations. This means we have to have a focussed plan for the new appointee to pursue to attract any outside funding for that purpose.

I hope and pray that we can form a useful group to move things on because Annan is no different to any of the other towns in the south of Scotland in needing revitalising. We cannot blame it all on Lockdown or the economic situation only as the world we live in is continually changing. There are all sorts of opportunities to explore because it is always easy to wallow in misery when we say our numbers are small. What came out of our AGM for me were a number of positives. First our faith, second our wonderful fellowship and thirdly a sense of drive.

Out of those positives surely with God's help we can discern a way that we can share those positives with others because God is not calling on us to just look after our own small community but to share the Good News of the Gospel with others. Buildings provide a resource which can be used for reaching the lonely, the handicapped and the poor both in spirit and in resources.

Nick Mark

What are we going to do?

A Minister at one of our previous U.R.C's used to encourage members to donate 15 percent of church income to charities and "good causes". Our A.G.M did not have any request for donations, but it is not something to be ignored. One of the strengths of the early church was "they gave to anyone who had need and the Lord added to their number daily" (Acts 2 v45-47).

As Christians we hold to Jesus' s second commandment to treat our neighbour as ourselves would wish to be treated. In the fourth mark of mission, we talk about transforming the unjust structures of society, and getting rid of poverty in the UK will require big changes in society.

Abroad we hear of new natural disasters in Bangladesh and crop failures in Zimbabwe. Both areas are supported through our Commitment For Life programme with Christian Aid. We need to re-vitalise our giving – to renew our speaking out about unfair prices, extortionate lending and other injustices. Our efforts, backed up by prayer, should focus on sharing what we have, on giving to foster change and on speaking out to educate and develop new initiatives to produce a more hopeful future.

As a church family what are we going to do to make change together?

Haydn Higton

A SUMMER MEDITATION

COME WITH ME FOR A LITTLE WHILE
AND LEAVE YOUR TROUBLED THOUGHTS BEHIND,
THEN STEPPING GENTLY DOWN THE PATH
DISCOVER HEALING PEACE OF MIND
THE PATH LEADS ON THROUGH SILENT WOODS
YET NATURE SPEAKS AND TOUCHES SOULS,
AND FAR AWAY THE RIVER SINGS
AS DISTANTLY THE CHURCH BELL TOLLS

COME SIT AWHILE BENEATH TREES
AND WATCH THE INSECTS HOVER ROUND
THEN AS THE BREEZE BEGINS TO STIR BE MORE AWARE OF SIGHT AND SOUND
A GENTLE RUSTLING IN THE TREES
THE BIRDS ARE SINGING IN THE LEAVES
SMALL CREATURES MOVING IN THE GRASS
A BUSY SPIDER SPINS AND WEAVES

TOO SOON THE SUN FALLS IN THE WEST,
OUR HOMEWARD JOURNEY MUST BEGIN,
BUT TRANQUIL THOUGHTS WILL STILL REMAIN
AND KEEP THE SUMMER DEEP WITHIN.

THE CHURCH GARDENER

Recently I had the pleasure of spending a holiday in Spittal, Berwick Upon Tweed.

Spittal stands on the South bank of the River Tweed and has long been a popular holiday resort. It has a Victorian Promenade and pavilion which gives it a very traditional beach feel.

We were so fortunate to have a holiday house which looked right onto the beach and enjoyed lots of lovely beach walks. It is so lovely to wake up to the sound of the waves in the morning.

Highlights of our week included walking out to Berwick Pier which was a first although we have holidayed in this area so many times. We also completed a lot of the Lowry Trail following in the footsteps of the artist L.S. Lowry who loved to holiday in this area and paint pictures. We went on a river cruise on the estuary and were lucky enough to spot dolphins and seals. On this particular day filming was taking place for the new ITV series Vera. We spotted Vera and the other actors filming on the pier, her hat is unmissable!

Visits to surrounding places included a visit to Alnwick Gardens as the gardens were just about to burst into colour. It is the most beautiful place.

We are so fortunate now that covid restrictions have been lifted that we can once again enjoy nature and the beauty we have all around us again.

Fiona Glass

CHANGE TO FLOWER MINISTRY

As from September 2022 church flowers will remain in church and looked after by a volunteer for that particular month, replacing any flowers or foliage which may have gone over and if necessary will be replaced with a new arrangement. This system will continue throughout the year.

For those of us who wish to continue placing flowers in church in memory of a loved one, this can be arranged, either by contributions to the flower fund or a personal arrangement in church. Please inform the volunteer for that month of your wishes.

With regard to church flowers for those who are ill, or those who cannot attend church services, this will continue by purchasing flowers/pot plant and delivered in the usual way. Remember the church must be informed of anyone poorly to carry out this duty.

A list of volunteers for flower duty is listed below. As always, the volunteers would welcome anyone who would like to help. Anyone wishing to join this group please contact Edith Woodman on the phone number listed below.

FLOWER ARRANGERS

Edith Woodman 01461 204715

Karen Bryson 01461 758271

Margaret Blake 01461 203728

Elaine Higton 07919406416

Volunteer List

| | |
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| September | Edith Woodman (Including Harvest) |
| October | Margaret Blake |
| November | Karen Bryson |
| December | Church Decorated for Christmas |
| January | Elaine Higton |
| February | Edith Woodman |
| March | Margaret Blake |
| April | Karen Bryson (7th Good Friday) |
| May | Elaine Higton |
| June | Edith Woodman |
| July | Margaret Blake |
| August | Karen Bryson |

Committed to supporting | our global partners | **BANGLADESH**

Reflection on Refugees

Amnesty International reports that in 2019, more than two-thirds of all refugees came from just five countries: Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar.

Syria has been the main country of origin for refugees since 2014 and at the end of 2019, there were 6.6 million Syrian refugees hosted by 126 countries worldwide.

In 2019, only half a per cent of the world's refugees were resettled. Over the past decade, just over 1 million refugees were resettled, compared to 3.9 million refugees who returned to their country.

Wealthier countries aren't doing nearly enough to share the cost of protecting people who have left everything behind. Appeals for humanitarian assistance for refugees are consistently – and often severely – underfunded.

In short, the world urgently needs a new, global plan based on genuine international cooperation and a meaningful and fair sharing of responsibilities.

Prayer for Refugees

Lord of the journey, we ask for your protection on all who have fled their homes.

Give them strength on their journeys and grant that they may find places of compassion at which to rest.

Ease their fear as they throw in their lot with strangers and keep alive their vision of finding a secure and welcoming home.

Amen.

'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!' THE ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS

To mark World Refugee Day tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh staged demonstrations (the Bari Cholo' or 'Let's go home' campaign) to demand repatriation back to Myanmar. Most have had to flee a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar. People came out despite a ban on rallies since 2019.

Almost a million Rohingya are confined to bamboo and tarpaulin shacks in thirty-four unsanitary, inadequate camps. They have no work, poor sanitation, and little access to education.

"We don't want to stay in the camps. Being refugees is not easy. It's hell. Enough is enough. Let's go home," Rohingya community leader Sayed Ullah said in a speech at one rally.

More than 890,000 Rohingya refugees are sheltering in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar region, the biggest cluster of refugee camps in the world.

About 92,000 Rohingya refugees reside in Thailand, 21,000 in India, and 102,000 in Malaysia. The Rohingya also make up a portion of Myanmar's 576,000 internally displaced people.

Please pray for an end to the brutal suppression of the Rohingya people so that a speedy and safe return of refugees might be possible. Thank you for your continued support through Commitment for Life for the work of our partners in the region.

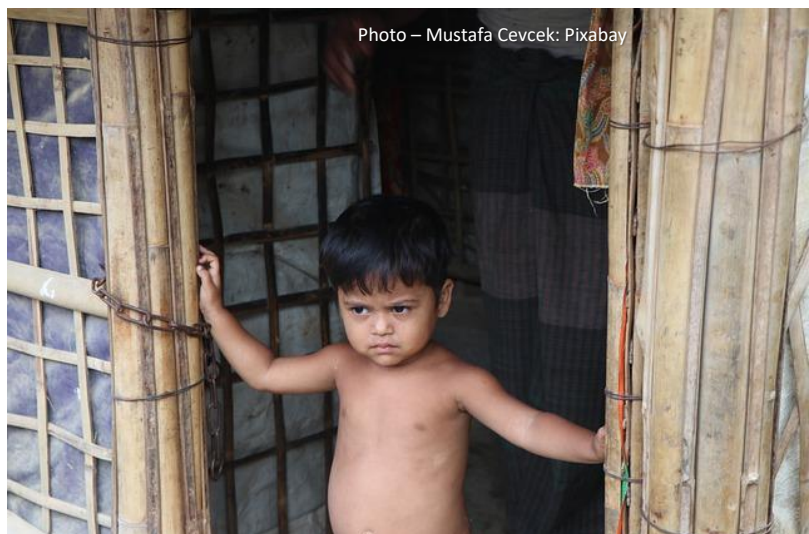


Photo – Mustafa Cevcek: Pixabay