

CONTACT

MAY 2023



The monthly magazine of
Annan United Reformed Church



Services May 2023

Date	Event	Leader
07/05/2023	Service	Mrs Nan Maxwell
14/05/2023	Christian Aid	Mrs Marion Kerr
14/05/2023	Christian Aid Evening Service	Revd., Nick Mark
21/05/2023	Fellowship Time	Revd., Haydn Highton
28/05/2023	Service	Mrs Sue Jackson

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Items for the June Magazine should reach Judith by 21st May 2023

CORONATION THOUGHT

“Throughout my life the message and teachings of Christ have been my guide and in them I find hope. It is my heartfelt prayer that you will continue to be sustained by your faith in times of trial and encouraged by hope in times of despair.”

Can we echo these words of Queen Elizabeth II

DEATH

We are sad to record the recent death of Robert Murray
of Greenlea Road, Annan.

Robert was the eldest son of Jim & Barbara Murray & was well known to many within our church family having been associated with this church for many years and was indeed our church organist for several years prior to going to university in Dundee. We give thanks for his life and offer our sincere condolences to his mother Barbara & her family.

Making Life Better

God wants people to thrive and flourish. Poverty is not part of God's plan, but it is now a major problem in most countries. The Covid – 19 pandemic, global conflict and the impact of climate change have all led to a dramatic rise in living costs which for many make it impossible to make ends meet.

For many people life has become a nightmare – not knowing how they are going to pay the bills and the rent or feed the children. Who, thirty years ago, would have thought that we needed food banks in this country in the 21st century and we live in a "Welfare State". Think what it must be like for people living in countries where their government does not have money to cushion the cost of living.

Christian Aid is more than a week of fund raising – it's work to alleviate hunger and bring hope to many poor communities goes on every day of each year. They promote biblical values of honesty, respect, hard work and generosity.

Let our giving be generous, loving and dedicated to million's much worse off than ourselves. Our donations can be continued throughout the year in the Commitment to Life Campaign for Christian Aid. In the slogan of the Practical Action charity – "Brighter Futures start with small solutions". Our donations may be small or large in our terms but whatever we give will help.

Christian Aid week is from 14th to 21st May.

Haydn Higton

May 2023 INTERIM MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

This is an interesting month for many of us because not only do we have Ascension Day and Pentecost Sunday occurring but the rare event of the Coronation of King Charles III on the 6th of May. Whether or not you believe in the concept of a Monarchy the 6th of May will have important religious consequences because of the approach to faith shown by our new King.

We could easily say that the Coronation has nothing much to do with the United Reformed Church because the Coronation certainly will not appoint King Charles as earthly head of the URC. It only appoints him head of the Church of England. Where it does affect us though is that the new King wants to be seen as not merely an upholder of the Established Church but as a Defender of the faiths. He takes this view as a way of reaching all of his subjects in the United Kingdom.

King Charles recognises that no longer is the Church of England the denomination chosen by the majority of his subjects. Similarly in Scotland the Church of Scotland is increasingly seen as no longer the chosen denomination of the majority of Scots. This could be a very important change in coming years because religious freedom is something which we take for granted but in recent years it has been seriously under threat.

Those who dismiss people of faith I suggest do so at their peril because increasingly in the tough times we live in the voluntary work done by faith groups is not just important but essential because Government both central and local of whatever persuasion simply cannot manage to help the population in the way it did in the last century.

When you look around you here in Annan the voluntary sector is filling an increasingly bigger gap in people's lives in so many ways. The Food Train, the Food Bank, Katie's Kitchen are just 3 examples of things that if we look back in history were in slightly different forms run by the Church.

In shaping the guest list for the Coronation King Charles has recognised the need to have voluntary organisations represented many of whom are run by people of faith. The Coronation and the recognition in its organisation of the voluntary work of so many ordinary people is a very good introduction to the two religious festivals we recognise this month.

First The Ascension must have been a tremendous shock to the disciples. Unlike us who have had years of preparation the disciples had what can only have been a crash course in winning people to Christ. The important point is that when the Ascension took place Christ did not leave the disciples or for that matter us in the lurch because instead the power of the Holy Spirit was available to all who have faith. The Pentecost is a great opportunity for us all to see how God is at work through the power of the Holy Spirit among the most unlikely of people but enabling them to achieve successes they could never have dreamed of. Let us pray as we celebrate the Coronation that it is not just a joyful day but the start of something new in our society where there is much greater emphasis on caring for those less fortunate than ourselves and much greater demonstration of faith in action through works.

Nick Mark

The Words of this month's poem reminds me of the popular pop song a few years ago entitled "One Day at a Time Lord" sung by Lena Martel.

Lord, for tomorrow and its needs
I do not pray,
Keep me, my god from stain of sin,
Just for today,
Let me both diligently work,
And duly pray;
Let me be kind in work and deed,
Just for today
Let me be slow to do my will,
Swift to obey,
Keep me in thy loving care,
Just for today
Let me no wrong or idle word,
Unthinking say
Set thou a seal upon my lips.
Just for today
Let me in season Lord, by grave,
In season gay
Let me be faithful to thy grace,
And if today, my tide of life
Shall ebb away
Grant me dear Lord
Thy Sacrament Divine,
So, for tomorrow and its needs
I do not pray
O, keep me, guide, love me Lord
Just for today

Church Gardener

Last month's Transform magazine contained an article about recording the New Testament in Scottish Gaelic and this had been launched at a reception at the Scottish Parliament in February.

Last month I was lucky enough to have a very interesting visit to the Scottish Parliament during a four-day school trip to Edinburgh where we were shown around by our local MSP Oliver Mundell.

The Parliament sits at the foot of the famous Royal Mile and across the road from The Palace of Holyrood. Both buildings so different in their styles obviously as the Palace has been there since 1678.

The Parliament building was designed by Enric Miralles who unfortunately died before the building was completed and it was opened in 2004 by H.M. The Queen at the cost of over £400 million.

We found out about its architecture it is branch shaped with many leaf features and also the history of the Parliament. We were fortunate enough to sit in the debating chamber and learned how important the clocks all around are when the MSPs are trying to get their points across if they speak too long they can be silenced. We were on the lobby stairs often featured on the news channels. Portraits of previous First Ministers and Presiding Officers hang on the stairwells.

We learned all about the work of our local MSP and had a very interesting question and answer session including how much he earns! There are 129 MSPs and over 1000 staff working in the Parliament.

The Day of our visit was a historic one as it was the day the new First Minister Hamza Yousaf was sworn in.

Fiona Glass.



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