

# CONTACT

September 2023



*The*  
**United  
Reformed  
Church**

## **WEEKLY WORSHIP AT ANNAN URC**

### **MORNING SERVICES 11:00 AM**

#### **Sunday 3rd:                      Morning Service                      Rosalind Fearon**

Welcomer:        H McNairn

Bible Reading: M Kerr

Intercessions: H Higton

#### **Sunday 10th:                      Morning Service                      Revd Nick Mark        + Church Meeting**

Welcomer:        L Higton

Bible Reading: R Mitchell

Intercessions: D Maxwell

#### **Sunday 17th:                      Morning Service                      David Townsend**

Welcomer:        R Richardson

Bible Reading: D Maxwell

Intercessions: H McNairn

#### **Sunday 24th:                      Back to Church Sunday      Revd Nick Mark**

Welcomer:        M Kerr

Bible Reading: H Higton

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	<a href="http://www.annanurc.chessck.co.uk">www.annanurc.chessck.co.uk</a>	
Church Facebook	Annan URC	
Church Email	<a href="mailto:annanurc@gmail.com">annanurc@gmail.com</a>	
Church Administrator	Doug Maxwell    01387 249300	
Magazine Editor	<a href="mailto:ruthmitchell821@btinternet.com">ruthmitchell821@btinternet.com</a>	01461 201450

*Items for October magazine should reach Ruth by Sunday 17th September, please*

## INTERIM MODERATOR'S LETTER SEPTEMBER 2023

Dear Friends,

I am writing this at a time when normal service so to speak resumes in both Church life and the world outside, as young people have either returned to School or are about to start higher education in all its shapes and sizes. For those of us who finished our childhood education a long time ago, it still means change with grandparents no longer needed to provide holiday care.

Here at Annan URC we welcome David Townsend as a URC Ordinand with the Scottish College. His sending Church is Augustine United Church Edinburgh, which has as its Minister the outgoing Moderator of General Assembly. David will be with us until January at least and has, I know, already had a warm welcome from many of you. His experience will be of much benefit to us as a fellowship, whilst we hope he has the opportunity of observing how a much smaller URC functions in a very different context to that which he has had in Edinburgh.

September sees the return of our Soup and Sweet Lunches after the summer break, and these are a firm favourite among not just our congregation but among other folk in Annan, and to my amazement we even have a long distance participant from the South of Cumbria. Such fellowship is a very important aspect of church life, and it is not always easy to split the spiritual life from the social life of the Church. The two complement each other.

September sees us building on the August services in wanting to organise ourselves to become more useful as a small part of God's mission in Jesus. On 3<sup>rd</sup> September we focus on Matthew 16 verses 21-28 and consider how frightening it can be to place ourselves in the hands of Jesus, but realise how much can be achieved by so doing. 10<sup>th</sup> September brings us on to Matthew 18 verses 15-20 to really consider the importance of community and holding it together. On 17<sup>th</sup> September, in looking at Matthew 18 verses 21-35 we look at another aspect of community, and that is the concept of forgiveness and the role of God in this. Finally on 24<sup>th</sup> September in Matthew 20 verses 1-16 we study the huge problem of fairness, or rather lack of it in our world, and our role in campaigning for a fairer world.

This month also sees a significant event in Church life, by holding a special service followed by a barbecue on 24<sup>th</sup> September. It will demonstrate the many roles Church plays in the community in seeking a fairer world. We have decided to join many other churches of a variety of denominations in celebrating **Back To Church Sunday**. The title is something of a misnomer, in the sense that the purpose of the day is to welcome new people who may never have been to church, as well as those who are lapsed church attenders, to see what church is like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I come across all the time in my daily life people who have preconceived ideas of what church people are like and what Church worship is about. So often those preconceptions are at tremendous variance from reality. Back to Church Sunday will be an opportunity for us to welcome new people and to showcase what we can offer. It isn't only about Sunday, it is about the fellowship we offer during the week and the opportunity for young people to participate in Girls Brigade, Guides and Brownies and not forgetting the musical training our organist Barbara offers.

The idea is that Church members invite people they know to join this happy day of celebration. Please don't worry if the Scottish weather makes it a rather dreich day, because we will, with a building our size, have suitable plans to be adaptable so we can give our visitors a true welcome! I would also mention there is no intention of holding a communion service that day as we want to keep things simple. There will be in the days to come more details from our organising Committee.

With every blessing

*Nick Mark*

## **VESTRY DAY 2023 ANNAN URC 9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

On behalf of our superb Treasury Team of Helen and Robin, I have been asked to respectfully draw your attention to our Annual Vestry Day on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September from 10am to 12noon. In the coming days you will be receiving an individual letter about this from the Eldership and myself. It may seem to some that all the Church does is beg for money! The problem is that like all organisations, whether secular or spiritual, we are not immune from the effects of our rapidly changing world. Therefore we do have to ask you to prayerfully consider whether or not you can spare something to help the work of Annan URC over and above your normal giving. If you are a gift aider it would be helpful if you could put your envelope number or a note to that effect on your Vestry Day contribution.

Whatever amount you can give is much appreciated because, although we make every effort to spend our money wisely, it always seems to go less far with the unexpected rises in the cost of living. As the Church at present is run entirely by volunteers while we lack a Stipendiary Minister, we want to relieve the eldership of any financial worries, as they have plenty to concern them already keeping the church fully functioning without the normal provision of a Full time or Part time Minister.

*Nick Mark*

*Interim Moderator*

### **SOCIAL AND FUNDRAISING**

Hello Friends

Well, our summer break is over.

Now September is here, we have to turn our thoughts to fundraising events.

Here are the dates the Social and Fundraising Committee have arranged for the last four months of the year:

September 14 <sup>th</sup>	Harvest Lunch
October 12 <sup>th</sup>	Soup and Sweet Lunch
November 9 <sup>th</sup>	Soup and Sweet Lunch
December 14 <sup>th</sup>	Soup and Sweet Lunch

All these events are from 11:30 am to 1:30pm

We ask for your support at all these events as, I am sure you understand, it takes a lot of effort by the committee to put on functions.

If anyone would like transport to attend, please let any of the Committee members\*\* know.

*Marion Kerr*

\*\* The following are members of the Social and Fundraising Committee:

Margaret Blake, Karen Bryson, Anne Foster, Lyn Higton, Marion Kerr,  
Helen McNairn, Edith Woodman



**URC Finance Department**

**9 August 2023**

**Ministry And Mission Fund - Annual Letter To Local Churches**

**To: All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches and  
our Local Ecumenical Partnerships**

**Dear Friends,**

**When will normal service be resumed?**

As we are writing this letter and closing off the URC's accounts for 2022, the country is still torn with industrial disputes, mostly notably with Health Service workers, rail industry workers, teachers etc. etc. Whatever your view as to the wisdom or justice of such action, we suspect all of us are affected by the disruption to some degree.

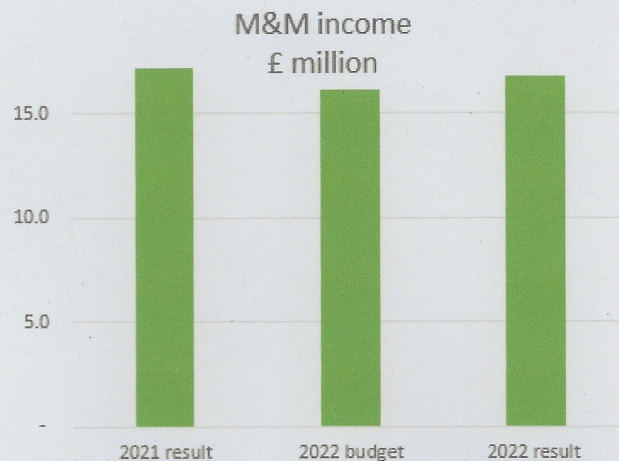
In church life too, are we back to "normal life"? Some churches no doubt have returned to something like their pre-Covid level of activity and attendance numbers. Quite a few have recommenced their activity but find their numbers have reduced. Some churches have found re-opening too difficult and have decided to close.

Whatever the "new normal" was to be, we suggest its arrival has (like many trains) been disrupted, delayed, or cancelled all together.

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The URC's finance officers had concerns that the late arrival of the return to normality would impact very significantly on the giving to the M&M Fund in 2022. However, the churches responded magnificently and the giving to M&M was £600,000 ahead of budget. It was also only 2.5% down on 2021's result.



So, thank you to all who continued to contribute to your local church, thank you to all those churches who met their commitment for 2022 in full, and thank you to all those who, in adversity, continued to treat the M&M Fund as the first priority and paid what they could.

With normal service not yet resumed, 2023 is not going to be an easy year either. We now have the added disruption of high inflation, pushing up wages and overhead costs. As the Spirit directs and as our means allow, can the churches once more respond to the call of our gracious, loving and ever-generous God?

Again, thank you all!

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter, please speak to your church treasurer who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ,

**Ian Hardie (Immediate Past Treasurer)**

**Vaughan Griffiths (Deputy Treasurer)**

## **FROM A HOLIDAY**

During the summer holidays, one of the memorable places I visited was the magnificent Alnwick Castle in Northumberland.

The Castle is home to the 12<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland and his family. Founded in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, it has been the seat of the Percy family for centuries, and is the second largest inhabited Castle in England. Alnwick Castle has been used as a film location many times, recently most famously for the "Harry Potter" movies and "Downton Abbey".

This year, to mark the Coronation of King Charles 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Castle staged a "Crowns and Coronets" exhibition. It had exhibits including crowns, coronets and robes worn by the Percy family at previous Coronations and pieces of furniture and wonderful diaries. It was absolutely fascinating as I love Royal Family history. In 1953 the present Duke's mother was Mistress of the Robes at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth 2<sup>nd</sup>.

History is fascinating and this Castle certainly has plenty to interest its many visitors.

*Fiona Glass*

*\*\* Did YOU have a holiday away somewhere in the summer? Could you write about it?*

*I always look forward to reading what Fiona has to share - why not do likewise?*

*Editor*

## **HARVEST OF THE SPIRIT**

The harvest is gathered, the crops are brought in,  
Give thanks now, for fruit and for grain,  
The bounty of nature, gifts in good measure  
All blessed by the sun and the rain.  
The harvest is needed to feed everyone  
To help every day to begin,  
But the fruit of the Spirit sustains us  
And nourishes us daily within.

The harvest of the Spirit is Faith, Joy and Peace,  
With Hope for tomorrow today,  
With Beauty around and Love in abundance  
And Guidance to show us the way.  
Rejoice in the harvest and all the earth gives,  
Give thanks for the blessings you find,  
Reach out to each other with trust and with love  
Share the harvest with all of mankind.

*Church Gardener*

## COMING EVENTS

I always look at the column in the Annandale Observer to check what is being organised in our local area. One date for everyone to note is the monthly outreach to the community starting on Thursday September 14<sup>th</sup> with Harvest Lunches.

On Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September we are celebrating Back to Church Sunday at 11:00 am and afterwards everyone is invited to stay for lunch. If the sun shines we can sit in the church garden which Irving Kerr keeps in such splendid condition. This is a day for everyone to come, but also to bring a friend, a neighbour or a relative to join in, enjoy the chat and the food. If it rains we have plenty of seats inside.

The following Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, is our Harvest Thanksgiving – a time to thank God for all His gifts to us, and to think of the millions of people who are not so well provided for as we are.

*Haydn Higton*

## “ALL ARE WELCOME”

Can you see the difference in the picture on the front page of the magazine this month? Not the changed view of the front of the church – nor the size or shape of the photograph. I have wanted to make this change for a long time but the coming Back to Church Sunday seemed the right time to “persuade” Robert to take a new photo (we shall try to improve the quality in future months!)

*Editor*



ANSWER: black and white definition does not make it easy to see, but I hope most people will notice **THE DOOR IS NOW OPEN.**

## SILENCE

“The silence is deafening” is a phrase we use jocularly, but there has been no response to the appeal in last month’s magazine asking for volunteers to join the rota to welcome folk at the door, etc.

Will you break the silence?



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