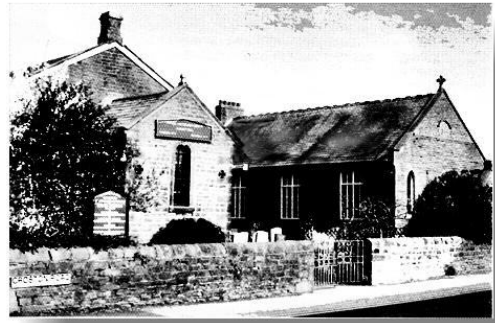




The
United
Reformed
Church

Garstang and Forton Churches

Newsletter



April & May 2020

Dear Friends,

My pastoral letter is based on a gospel tract given to me by Joyce Holden. The tract titled 'The Captain', by H.V. Capsey, 1933, was in a Jewellery box, previously owned by her late aunt, Mrs K. Hallas. The writer of the tract used the analogy of the captain of a football team, to illustrate some of the qualities he finds in a supreme measure in Jesus Christ.

He writes that a good captain must know the game and play it well. He must be fair, never taking a mean advantage, yet keen and enthusiastic. Also, the captain must be selfless, not easily discouraged, nor daunted in a stiff encounter. The captain must remain master and not a puppet at all times. Furthermore, the captain understands his team, whether on the field or off it, and can bring the best out of them. In response the team are loyal to the captain, and to each other. They develop a strong team spirit as they play and bond together, to achieve success for the team.

Friends, there is a link to Jesus, as what the writer describes is not just about the skills of the captain, but of the person he really is. Jesus, the Son of God, who came as one of us is the best Captain in the game of life. He was selfless, he understands humanity, and he wasn't daunted by the challenge of the cross. On that cross of agony, he took our darkest moments, our brokenness, pain, shame, fear and anxiety, demonstrating God's enduring sacrificial love for us. When he rose again, he gave us new hope and an eternal future. In return let us serve him with loyalty and commitment. Let us aim to become not the best player **in** his team, but the best player **for** his team. *I am His and He is mine – bought with the precious blood of Christ. (In Christ alone, Stuart Townend, 2001)*

May you know the power of his resurrection in your life!

Have a blessed Easter.

Irene John

Garstang URC is a member of the North Lancashire Partnership of churches.

Garstang URC, Croston Road, Garstang, PR3 1FL

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GARSTANG DIARY FOR APRIL 2020

Wednesday	1st	12noon – 1.00pm 1.15pm – 2.15pm	Last Lent Lunch of lent in aid of Christian Aid. CANCELLED
Thursday	2nd	9.15am 10.00am – 12noon	Bible Study with Revd. Dr. Irene John. Quiet time in the church. Charity Coffee Morning by Garstang URC Women's Guild in aid of Memory Garden. CANCELLED
Friday	3rd	2.00pm	NISCU meeting in Garstang URC church.
Sunday	5th	10.45am	Palm Sunday – Mike Hart.
Tuesday	7th	7.45am – 8.00am	Christians Together in Garstang & District Morning Prayers. CANCELLED
Thursday	9th	9.15am 7.00pm	Quiet time in the church. Agape meal and communion at the URC with the Methodists.
Friday	10th	6.00am	The Good Friday prayer walk to Greenhalgh Castle will start from SS Mary & Michael's Church.
Sunday	12th	10.45am	Easter Sunday – Revd. Dr. Irene John with the decoration of the cross.
Tuesday	14th	7.45am – 8.00am	Christians Together in Garstang & District Morning Prayers. CANCELLED
Wednesday	15th	2.00pm 7.30pm	Tea & Chat in the Church hall. CANCELLED Third Wednesday Club Vintage Film Night. Educating Rita starring Bafta award winner Michael Caine.
Thursday	16th	9.15am	Quiet time in the church.
Sunday	19th	10.45am	Rev. David Greenwood.

Tuesday	21st	7.45am – 8.00am	Christians Together in Garstang & District Morning Prayers. CANCELLED
Wednesday	22nd	11.00am	Visit to Westwards care home.
Thursday	23rd	9.15am	Quiet time in the church.
Sunday	26th	10.45am	Lyndsay Williamson.
Tuesday	28th	7.45am – 8.00am	Christians Together in Garstang & District Morning Prayers. CANCELLED
Thursday	30th	9.15am	Quiet time in the church.

April 2020	Readers	Flowers	Door Stewards
Sunday	5th Marion Myerscough	Ann Wicks	Margaret Hesketh & Janet Dixon
Sunday	12th David Ralphs	Easter	Margaret Hesketh & Janet Dixon
Sunday	19th Sally Watson	Kate Parker	Marlene Towns & Lynne Mason
Sunday	26th Barrie Mason	Beryl Moorby	Marlene Towns & Barrie Mason
Elder of the Month	Mary Thornber / Gordon Bell		Jean Wadsworth
Communion Elders	Marion Myerscough		David Watson
Charity Coffee Morning	Garstang URC Women's Guild for Memory Garden		

Readers will be contacted by Bev before each Sunday, either by phone or email, who will let you know your readings. If you change your date with someone else, please let Bev know

GARSTANG DIARY FOR MAY 2020

Sunday	3rd	10.45am	Michael Pickles.
Tuesday	5th	7.45am – 8.00am	Christians Together in Garstang & District Morning Prayers. CANCELLED
Thursday	7th	9.15am 10.00am – 12 noon	Quiet time in the church. Charity Coffee Morning in aid of Parkinsons UK. CANCELLED
Friday	8th	10.30am	Church walk from Ellel to Forton URC.
Sunday	10th	10.30am	Joint URC/Methodist Communion service at Garstang URC church led by Revd. Dr. Irene John.
Tuesday	12th	7.45am – 8.00am	Christians Together in Garstang & District Morning Prayers. CANCELLED
Thursday	14th	9.15am	Quiet Time in the church.

Friday	15th	8.00pm	Deadline for Newsletter articles by email to crispin@myerscough.co.uk
Sunday	17th	10.45am	Chris Lamb.
Tuesday	19th	7.45am – 8.00am	Christians Together in Garstang & District Morning Prayers. CANCELLED
Wednesday	20th	11.00am 2.00pm 7.30pm	CTiGD AGM and meeting. CANCELLED Tea & Chat in the Church Hall. CANCELLED Third Wednesday Club – Pet Hates
Thursday	21st	9.15am	Quiet time in the church.
Saturday	23rd	12noon	Helene & Eddie's wedding.
Sunday	24th	10.45am	Revd. Dr. Irene John.
Tuesday	26th	7.45am – 8.00am	Christians Together in Garstang & District Morning Prayers. CANCELLED
Wednesday	27th	11.00am	Visit to Westwards care home.
Thursday	28th	9.15am	Quiet time in the church.
Sunday	31st	10.45am	Pentecost – Lindsay Williamson.

May 2020	Readers	Flowers	Door Stewards
Sunday 3rd	Jean Rogers	Pam Wade	Pauline Glasgow & Simon Corless
Sunday 10th	Bev Lamey	June Baker	Pauline Glasgow & Simon Corless
Sunday 17th	Pauline Greenwood	Alene Balmain	Lynne Mason & David Watson
Sunday 24th	Jack Rogers	Marion Myerscough	Barrie Mason & Ann Peters
Sunday 31st	Mary Thornber	Lynne Mason	Pauline Greenwood & Ann Peters
Elder of the Month	Stella Clarke		Gordon Bell / Mary Thornber
Communion Elders	Bev Lamey		Pat Williams
Charity Coffee Morning	Parkinson's UK (Preston Branch)		

Readers will be contacted by Bev before each Sunday, either by phone or email, who will let you know your readings. If you change your date with someone else, please let Bev know.

FORTON URC. SCHOOL LANE, FORTON. PR3 0AS

A GRADE 2 LISTED BUILDING IN A RURAL SETTING.

Secretary Mrs Susan Redmayne

Treasurer Mrs Joyce Holden.



April 2020

5TH	JOYCE HOLDEN 9.15am	PALM SUNDAY
10TH	GOOD FRIDAY 3pm	LED BY REVD DAVID GREENWOOD.
12TH	EASTER SUNDAY JOIN WITH GARSTANG NO SERVICE AT FORTON	
19TH	REVD. IRENE JOHN 9.15am	COMMUNION
26TH	TBA	

Our traditional Good Friday Service this year led by Revd David Greenwood. **3pm.** Followed by the Traditional Afternoon Tea.

Open Church Wednesday **April 1st** from 2pm to 3.30pm



Speaker Pat Ashcroft on "Bygone Times"

May 2020

3RD	CHRIS LAMB 9.15am
10TH	CHRISTIAN AID SERVICE AT GARSTANG NO SERVICE AT FORTON
17TH	LYNDSAY WILLIAMSON 9.15am
24TH	REVD. IRENE JOHN 9.15am
31ST	TBA

Open Church Wednesday **May 6th** from 2pm to 3.30pm

Speaker to be announced at the April meeting.

Friday May 8th May Walk from Garstang to Forton arranged by Simon Corless

Prayer group meets on the 1st Friday of the month from 9.30am during school term times.

Thank you to all who visited our Pop Up Café at Robinson's Potato Weekend in February. £720 was raised and a good time had by both local and nursery visitors. Lots of soup, tea, cakes and chat.

One of our partner organisations in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories (IoPt) is B'Tselem.

The name B'Tselem (lit. in the image of) alludes to Genesis 1:27: **“And God created humankind in His image...”** Since 1989, B'Tselem has documenting Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights. It hopes to minimize such violations by publishing statistics, testimonies, eyewitness accounts and video footage - <https://www.btselem.org>.

On the recent URC educational visit to IoPt, we met the incredible Issa Amro, who works for B'Tselem.

Issa spoke to us in Hebron, very near to where he was born on Shuhada Street. This street is now closed off by the Israeli military, as is much of the city, to protect the settler Israeli population. Issa can't go home... Issa Amro is the coordinator Youth Against Settlements (YAS), a project that involves young Palestinians in nonviolent resistance against the Israeli occupation. His dream is to see nonviolence used as the core



Issa Amro speaking to the URC Visitors

methodology for a comprehensive, Palestinian resistance against the occupation. YAS strongly discourages youth knife violence against Israelis.

Issa has been arrested dozens of times. Bernie Sanders wrote in support of him in May 2017. He was released on bail and later met with Sanders and the US Congress.

Spend 3 months in Palestine and Israel

MONITORING HUMAN RIGHTS



NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
FULL TRAINING GIVEN
EXPENSES COVERED
LIVING ALLOWANCE PROVIDED

EAPPI provides protection by presence, monitors human rights abuses, supports local peace activists and advocates for an end to the military occupation of Palestine.

For more information visit:
quaker.org.uk/applyeappi
Closing date: 24th April



EAPPI UK & Ireland

Commitment for Life is the Global Justice Programme of the United Reformed Church in the UK

kevin.snyman@urc.org.uk | 020 7520 2726 | suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk | 020 7916 8638

www.urch.org.uk/cfl | www.facebook.com/comm4life | Twitter: @Comm4Life1

Tom and Alene

Tom and Alene want to thank everyone for the lovely flowers and card for their 50th Wedding Anniversary which was on the 28th February. It was a lovely surprise. Best regards, Tom and Alene.

Betty Seeger

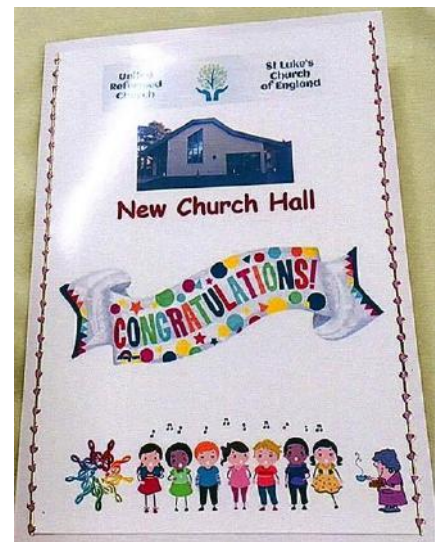
Some of the congregation will remember Betty Seeger, Wally's wife. Wally died some years ago and Betty is house-bound. She enjoys receiving the notices and Newsletter and thanks you all for the lovely flowers she received from the church on the day of her 97th birthday. Stella

Pam Masters

I would like to thank everyone for your prayers and good wishes over the past weeks. The flowers are beautiful and very much appreciated. In friendship, Pam Masters.

New Church Hall

The North Lancashire Missional Partnership Churches received an invitation to the Official Opening of the new St Luke's C of E & URC Church Hall at Slyne with Hest on 7th February. Five members from Garstang accompanied Revd Irene and were welcomed into the light and spacious hall which rapidly filled up for the opening ceremony. There were performances by a primary school choir and 'Jennifer's Dancers', which set the informal mood for the evening much enjoyed by young families kitchen through its paces and brought trays of food and drinks out to the buffet. Our only regret was none of us had taken a camera! We therefore owe thanks to Sally who designed the congratulations card and to Daleen who kindly took the photos.



From Management Committee - Green Energy and Carbon Footprints

Over the past couple of years, mainly at the instigation and encouragement of John Allen, we have become much more aware of our responsibilities to look after God's creation, and the opportunities which we have (both as a church and as individuals) to take action to protect the fragile environment. This has been reflected in the way we look after our church buildings and land, and in the purchases that we make. Recently, we renewed our contracts for the supply of electricity and gas, and we were able to use the services of Green Journey, a firm appointed by the URC Synod to help local churches find new suppliers that meet their needs. That worked well for us - although prices are higher than before, our two new suppliers are charging less than was being proposed by our old one, and we have been able to fix the prices for over four years! Not only that, but the electricity is from totally renewable sources (wind and hydro), and the gas price includes offsetting all carbon produced in its manufacture.

Although Green Energy do not offer a service to private individuals, this has shown how easy it can be to find a more responsible source of energy supplies, and the church encourages you to do the same when your energy renewal falls due. Shopping around can bring good results.

The church is now monitoring its "carbon footprint", with the aim of reducing it steadily over time. You can do the same. There are many websites offering tools to help you measure your personal impact on the environment. The URC recommends the one provided by WWF: www.footprint.wwf.org.uk. It gives detailed results and ideas for improvement. Let us know how you get on! Gordon.

Christians Together in Garstang & District, April-May 2020

Weekly prayer meetings held every Tuesday at 7.45 am. In April the meetings will take place at St Mary & St Michael's Church and in May at St Thomas's.

NISCU (Northern Inter-Schools Christian Union), an ecumenical Christian group that supports all who work and study in local and special schools in the Garstang area, holds monthly prayer meetings on a rota basis in Garstang churches. The next meetings will take place at 2 pm on Friday 3 April in the URC then on Friday 1 May at Garstang Methodist Church.

At its meeting on 26 February, the CTiGD group was given an update on the Christian Heritage Trail Project. £1,000 has been received in sponsorship and letters of thanks have been sent to the sponsors. Submissions from each church are being passed to the printers, it was agreed to print 1,000 copies and that there should be no charge.

On Maundy Thursday Garstang Methodists will join members of Garstang URC for an Agape meal and communion at the URC. The Good Friday prayer walk on 10 April will start from St Mary & St Michael's Church at 6 am. Details of a Palm Sunday walk from Calder Vale will be circulated shortly and it is hoped the timings of other Easter services will be published in the green Focus.

Lis Lowe, who is stepping down, was thanked for her work as Chair of CTiGD. Discussions on finding a successor and also someone to take over as Secretary will take place at the AGM.

Next meeting - AGM and Ordinary Meeting - Wed 20 May, 11 am at the Friends Meeting House. Stella

Coffee in Southport

Rod and Jean Evans look forward to welcoming Garstang and Forton friends to a coffee morning at their flat in Southport on **Wednesday 13 May from 10.30am**. A list will go up in April where those who'd like a lift can put a tick. There'll be the option of going for lunch at Tappers or enjoying some free time in Southport afterwards. Stella.

Rotary Shoebox scheme



Last November Michael Bradley of Rotary came to collect almost 50 filled boxes from us. We had already filled and sent off 50 boxes earlier in the year.

Last year Rotary sent in all 46,488 boxes to Eastern Europe. The 14,310 boxes distributed in December - including ours - went to the Ukraine.

This little boy from the Ukraine is clutching the box he received in December 2019.

As some of you may know, the Ukraine is one of the largest and poorest countries in Europe, even poorer than Nepal and Bangladesh. Many of the old and infirm are forced to beg on the streets.

So it is good to know that the boxes we fill are not only for children and teenagers, but also for older adults, and those with disabilities.

Thank you once again for all your contributions. Looking at the storage boxes in the crèche room, I think we are ready to have another box filling afternoon. The hall is free on **Monday 27 April** from **2 pm**. With your help, we hope to fill another 50 boxes.

April and May are Teenage months!

We'll be collecting

sportswear, scarves, gloves, socks, hats, toothbrushes, toothpaste, stick deodorants, brushes, combs, mirrors, jewellery, make-up, games, playing cards and tennis balls.

Thank you so much once again, and I do hope you will come along and help us fill the boxes on **Monday 27 April** from **2 pm**.

Pauline

North Lancashire Partnership Joint Service

A joint service with all seven churches in the North Lancashire Partnership was held on Sunday, 15th March at Bowerham URC, Lancaster. It was led by the Moderator of General Assembly, Rev. Nigel Uden. He preached on the value of water and 'Quenching communities' and his prayers of intercession included a prayer on the corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic.

'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' Psalm 46:1, NRSV
As so much is re-shaped by Corona virus, Covid-19, let us pray with;

people left unwell, beckoned by death or bereaved,
people providing professional health care and advice, looking after loved ones at home or working to create treatments and cures,
people shaping the response of nations and neighbourhoods,
of commerce and industry,
of service and voluntary organisations and of communities of faith,
people who are anxious or afraid, alone or isolated.

Living, loving God, we praise you,
and through times of peril we lean into you,
for in Jesus Christ you have trodden paths as difficult as ours,
revealing there a love that nothing defeats, a love that bears us through.
Even as we strive to behave responsibly, and to care reliably,
so we feel after you that in these uncertain times we might trust you are with us,
our refuge and strength, and our faith, hope and love might be renewed,
through Jesus Christ, Amen.



Some photos from the service by courtesy of Lynne Cadzow, Bowerham URC.

Charity Coffee Mornings

March's Charity Coffee Morning was in aid of CRY, Cardiac Risk in the Young. It was very well attended with the cake stall being popular as ever.



Unfortunately the next three Coffee Mornings have been cancelled due to the Corona virus outbreak.

Lent Lunches

The Lent Lunches in support of Christian Aid have too been cancelled due to the Corona virus outbreak following guidance from the URC, Catholic, Methodist and Anglican websites. It has been suggested that when the crisis has passed, a joint meal in celebration with donations to Christian Aid could take place.



Corona virus (Corvid-19) A message from Revd. Dr. Irene John

Dear Friends,

Following advice from the URC to its churches, we have suspended all acts of worship, physical meetings and other church activities. We are deeply sorry that we have had to make this decision, but in view of the current circumstances, and with the government strongly discouraging public gatherings we feel it is the right thing to do. No one knows the full extent of the crisis, so the closure could be for a few weeks or even months. We shall keep you updated as guidance changes. We recognise that this closure will be a blow to those for whom gathering for worship and church activities is a lifeline, helping to curb the effects of loneliness and isolation. In view of this the Elders and members of the Pastoral Care Group, are working closely together to support you in the following ways:

1. If anyone is in need of urgent help please contact me on 01524923736 or Jean Wadsworth on 01995238192.
2. Those on the pastoral care list will be contacted weekly, by phone or email, for a chat to see how they are, and what help is required. Help could include listening, receiving and passing on prayer requests and pastoral news. It could also include practical help with shopping, and anything else that is feasible for others to take on board. If you or anyone you know would benefit from this, please contact your elder.
3. Please be assured that we shall be careful at all times, not to put anyone's health and well-being at risk.
4. We shall continue to pray and for each other via the prayer chain coordinated by June.
5. There will be a 'thought for the week', uploaded to the Garstang website each week.
6. URC daily devotions will now include a short act of worship. See devotions.urb.org.uk. You can also access worship services on TV and Radio Stations.

Friends this is a challenging time for all, be assured of our prayers. Draw strength from the words of the psalmist: *You are my God; in you I trust. He will keep you safe from all hidden dangers and from all deadly diseases. He will cover you with his wings; you will be safe in his care; his faithfulness will protect and defend you. Psalm 91:3&4.*

May the Lord bless, protect and take care of you all.

Irene John

Martin Luther and the Plague

Back in 1527, a deadly plague hit Martin Luther's town of Wittenberg and he wrote a letter to a friend, the Rev. Dr. John Hess, on "Whether One Should Flee From A Deadly Plague".

"I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbour needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God."

