

Kendal

United Reformed Church



December 2018 and January 2019

**Kendal United Reformed Church**

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## **Minister's Letter**

I can hardly believe that we are approaching Christmas, the time of year that Christians remember God's great gift of his Son's coming to earth and living amongst us.

I may have started my Christmas shopping, but confess to being a "grumpy old woman", as for some weeks now the shops have been tempting us in to buy and buy.



Yes, it is good to give and receive at this time of year, but, as I do every year, I ask myself what understanding of Christmas our society has and what place, if any, the baby born to be King will have at his birthday celebrations. Let us make a special effort during Advent to prepare ourselves spiritually for Christmas. Let us also take the opportunity to ask our family, friends and neighbours to join with us in our Carols by Candlelight on Saturday 22 December in the hall from 3.00 to 5.00pm. There will be the usual drinks and mince pies, as well as the opportunity to come and enjoy ourselves together and to reflect on the real meaning of Christmas.

At the beginning of the year, one of our members said this to me: "Pam, I really believe we will sell this year."

Almost beyond belief, we had interest in the church and two offers. The legal process has taken longer than we imagined. Your Redevelopment Committee has constantly had to revise plans and time scales, but we are deeply thankful to God that all is nearly in place for "the year of the sale." (At the time of writing, we hope to complete in early January)

Next year will be known as "a year of change" –

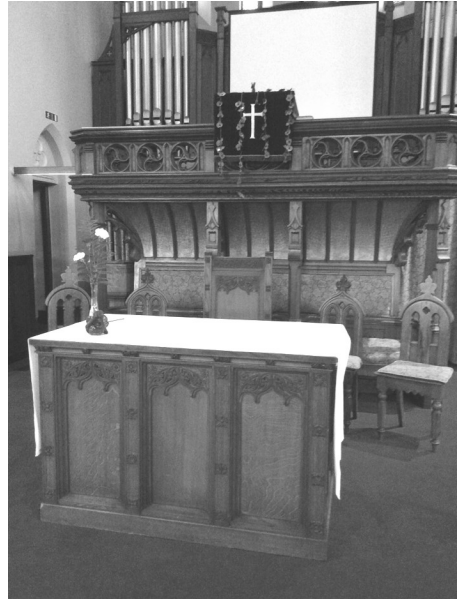
- change as we move out to Abbot Hall Community Centre,
- change as the redevelopment takes place,
- change as we employ a new Lay Pastor/Development Worker to help prepare us for moving back to our new home,
- change in where we will do some of the old and begin to do new things, reaching out to Highgate and our town.

Yes, it will be a time of change, and change is challenging and unsettling for us all. May we make every effort to remain together and to ask others to join us at Abbot Hall and 106 when we return.

I wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas and New Year.

**Pam**

The last service to be held in the old church building took place on Remembrance Day. These are some pictures of the occasion, provided by Anne Handley.



### **Secretary's Ramblings**

At the time of writing this we still have not exchanged contracts for the sale of the Church. So obviously planning events is difficult at the moment. However, we are hoping by the New Year we will be out of the buildings and worshipping in Abbot Hall Social Centre. However, Abbot Hall do have previous bookings for some Sundays and you will see from the diary that on 6 January we will be going to Stricklandgate Methodist Church as Abbot Hall is not free. We will also be continuing with our regular joint worship services at the end of the month with Stricklandgate Methodists, and in January it will be our turn to go to them. Then we will welcome them to our venue at Abbot Hall in February and continue this pattern throughout the foreseeable future. We will be putting up notices on our noticeboard with locations of our worship, and also updating our website and giving out flyers. We will try and give you all as much notice as possible about what is happening. If the sale slips yet again, we may still be in our Main Hall in January.



Once we have completed the sale, we will have to vacate the whole site fairly quickly as our architect wants to get our builders in to start stripping down the site. Once the builders are on site, the whole site will be out of bounds for all, and this will include the old caretaker's flat, as this will be used by the workmen. We did originally hope to use the flat for meetings and administration, but this will not prove possible. Upon exchange of contracts we will start clearing out the church, so if you have any personal possessions please take them, and if there is anything you particularly want please let me know as soon as possible.

I now just include some notes from the last Church Meeting held on 21 October. The church meeting passed the following resolution: -

*Kendal URC Church Meeting authorises the Elders Meeting to employ a local lay pastor jointly with Carver Uniting Church, and notes that the funding for this post will come from the money allocated by the Synod Manse Scheme.*

The selection and interviewing panel will be made up of one elder from Kendal, one from Carver, our Minister Martyn and one independent person. Hopefully we may have a new local lay pastor in place early in the New Year.

The Elders have now decided to meet on the second Monday in the month from 2.00 to 4.00 pm, at least during the winter months. During our December meeting we will be reviewing the past year and planning for the new.

The night shelter has started, and we will be offering support to the Monday evening session held at the Salvation Army.

We offered our normal bacon buttie service during the recent Mountain Festival and all donations for the refreshments went to the Kendal Mountain Rescue. Thanks to everyone that helped to make this possible.

I hope that many of you will be able to attend some of the Christmas Services, firstly the Carols by Candlelight Service at Stricklandgate Methodist Church on Sunday 16 December at 4.00 pm and then our Carols by Candlelight Service (to include drinks and mince pies) the following week on Saturday 22 December from 3.00 to 5.00 pm. Our Christmas Day service will be held at 10.00 am and we are hoping that this will be the last service in our hall.

Please note that there will not be our normal Wednesday morning coffee mornings in December and January. We hope to resume these in February.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year.

**Sheila**

**From Comrie's parish newsletter, *Outlook*:**

**How to appreciate God's gift of life**

Life should NOT be a journey to the grave  
with the intention of arriving safely  
in an attractive and well-preserved body.  
But rather to skid in sideways,  
chocolate in one hand,  
wine in the other,  
body thoroughly used up,  
totally worn out and screaming  
"WOO HOO what a ride!"

***Submitted by Moira Rose, Carver Uniting Church***

## **Church Diary**

### **December**

**All services at Kendal United Reformed Church are planned to take place in the Hall, but this is subject to change**

Sunday	2	10.30 am	Worship, led by Pam Dent
Tuesday	4	10.00 am	Prayer Shawl Group in the Lecture Hall
Sunday	9	10.30 am	Worship, led by Revd Pam Noonan
Thursday	13	2.30 pm	Afternoon Communion in the Lecture Hall followed by tea/coffee and chat
		7.00 pm	Discussion Group at 6 Swallow Close (Please park in Valley Drive)
Sunday	16	10.30 am	Worship , led by the Elders
		4.00 pm	Carols by Candlelight at Stricklandgate Methodist Church
Saturday	22	3.00 pm to 5.00 pm	Carols by Candlelight in the Main Hall, including drinks and mince pies
Sunday	23	10.30 am	Worship, led by Revd Pam Noonan
Tuesday	25	10.00 am	Christmas Day Worship, led by Revd Pam Noonan
Sunday	30	10.30 am	Joint Worship at Stricklandgate Methodist Church



### **A Welsh Grace**

Let not our hearts be busy inns  
that have no room for thee  
but cradles of the living Christ  
and his nativity.

***Submitted by Rhona Robertson***



## January

**All services are planned to take place either at Abbot Hall Social Centre or at Stricklandgate Methodist Church, but this is subject to change**

Sunday	6	10.30 am	Worship, led by Revd Martyn Coe, at Stricklandgate Methodist Church
Thursday	8	2.30 pm	Afternoon Communion (venue to be confirmed) followed by tea/coffee and chat
Sunday	13	10.30 am	Worship, at Abbot Hall Social Centre, led by John Costello
		12.00 noon	Church Meeting after Worship
Tuesday	15	10.00 am	Prayer Shawl Group in Abbot Hall
Wednesday	16	7.00 pm	Discussion Group at 6 Swallow Close (Please park in Valley Drive)
Sunday	20	10.30 am	Worship (CTiKD pulpit exchange) at Abbot Hall Social Centre
		12.30 pm	Jacob's Join at Kendal Parish Church—Mission Community Lunch
Sunday	27	10.30 am	Joint Worship, led by Revd Pam Noonan, at Stricklandgate Methodist Church

### **From the editor:**

Thank you again to all who have contributed to this magazine. All contributions are welcome—news of events, reflections on current concerns, prayers, photographs or any items which might be of interest to church members. Please let me have any material for the next issue by Monday 14 January.

## **A visit to war graves in France**

### ***Revd Martyn Coe writes***

A few weeks ago, I travelled to France with about 1000 Army Cadets. We took 60 from Cumbria and joined groups from all over the UK. In all about 4000 cadets went to France as a part of a programme to visit war graves and to understand the enormity of the battle of the Somme. We were only in France for one day and at the conclusion of the trip was a service (recognising all the world faiths) at the Thiepval memorial to 72000 British and South African soldiers who died in the area and have no known grave.



The Cadets and the Adult Instructors were struck by the size of the battle and the stories of what went on at each place we visited, and it was clear the reality of the effects of the war were being engaged with at a deep level.

At each place they would look for anyone of the same name: there were some who knew they had a relative who fought in a particular battle, and, of course, they were close to the age of so many of those who had died. It was a very thoughtful day.

As we stood in one cemetery, I was asked whether it made me question my faith to see such a sea of graves.

It didn't, and it doesn't. It does make me aware of how dreadful things can become when our human weaknesses take over. I don't believe in a God who would cause such destruction any more than I think God decides whether I trip over my shoe lace or not. I do believe in God who weeps with those who are hurting, I believe in a God who grieves with us and who wants us to find better ways to be. Some of the young people will want to join the Armed Forces and, again, here was the chance to discuss the fact that death is ultimately a possibility for those who choose to join.

It was a long journey for a short visit, but I am so often surprised and impressed with the thoughtful conversations which I have with members of the ACF. It is a privilege to be a part of that conversation and (I hope) to demonstrate and talk about the love of God and what responding to that love might do to change the world and to support each individual.

**Martyn**

**A Vote of Thanks**

***Revd Lis Mullen writes***

Since none of us offered a vote of thanks to Pam at the last AGM she will chair, I would like to do so now - and I'm sure I speak for everyone who was there.

Thank you Pam for being a wise and caring leader. I wasn't present when you first arrived in Kendal URC but Carole always spoke highly of you as a great support to her and I personally could see the difference you had made when I came back to Kendal - this time as a member. You seem able to fit so much into your limited week that I am convinced you give far more hours to us than you should, but I'm also pleased you are able to fit in some care of yourself and Dave - at least in your cycling and theatre trips! And we must also add thanks to Dave for sharing you with us.

You have involved us in the Imagine Church Project - helping us to understand what it means to be a 24/7 Christian. Your services are relevant and carefully planned. You are leading us towards a major move from a much loved building into a new way of being church on the High Street and you are aware of the need for a creative approach to helping us do this differently. You really have your finger on the button when it comes to the pastoral care of your congregation who you know really well, and you are leading us towards the time when we won't have such care by planning to employ a lay worker in this role. There is so much more you do that none of us know about and a lot that only a few know, but take it from me: you are loved and respected by the members of Kendal URC, and we thank you for giving yourself to working with us towards God's Kingdom.

***Lis***

### **Prayer Shawl Group**

One of our members, Kay Pritchard, read out this beautiful poem at our last prayer shawl meeting. It appeared recently in the Methodist Recorder. We have now given out over 180 shawls since we started five years ago, and we know that many of the recipients benefit greatly from them. If you do know of anyone who needs a shawl please ask me or Pam.

### ***Sheila Andrews***

#### **At the heart: a prayer pilgrimage... with a difference.**

Bowing my head over the needles and yarn,  
I offered a prayer for the one who would receive it –  
my first prayer shawl.

Slowly and carefully  
I began the casting on, 1,2,3,4,  
the needles dipping rhythmically,  
in, out, in, out until, 62, 63, 64, 65!  
A quick check – yes, 65.

So began the task that I had set myself.  
It was to be a journey not measured in miles,  
but in inches.  
Nevertheless, I was embarking upon a true pilgrimage.  
There would be pauses on the way and breaks for refreshment.  
I had no idea how long it would take, as,  
some days there would be great progress  
whilst others there would be virtually none.  
However, I did know that, at the heart, and  
woven into every stitch,  
would be prayer.

Now and again I stopped and held the work  
and prayed.

I asked that the one who would hold it,  
cuddle it, wear it, even cling to it,  
might experience a special peace and calm,  
and know that, at the heart,  
was not only a labour of love,  
but a desire that they would feel  
enfolded in the love of God

Growth was slow.  
64 inches a long way off.  
When would I ever finish it.  
Needle- in-yarn-round-and-off  
Needle-in-yarn-round-and-off.

Each time I took it up  
more prayer was added.  
As it grew I often paused  
and silently blessed it.

The soothing actions kept me going.  
I felt steeped in prayer and  
experienced a wonderful peace.  
I had a deep sense of God's presence  
as I continued building up the fabric.

Needle-in-yarn-round-and-off became my silent mantra.  
Hundreds of times over and over, rhythmically repetitive,  
until the day came when the rhythm changed.  
Needle-in-yarn-round-and-off-and-off-and off!  
65 times!

As I held it up I felt like rejoicing, and I did.  
I prayed with it held close to my cheek.  
I let it run through my hands  
as I prayed:

Bless the one who will receive it, Lord.  
Envelop them with peace and tranquillity.  
May they know that this  
humble gift is prayerfully offered,  
and that,  
at the heart...  
is love.

***Margaret Doughty***

## **First World War**

### ***Neil Wilson writes***

The recent concentration of interest resulting from the centenary of the armistice, has directed me again to my father's voluminous correspondence during the previous years. Returning home from a United Free Church mission station in Northern Rhodesia in 1916 in order to play his part as a doctor in the conflict, he joined the RAMC, and served with the Durham Light Infantry and the Gordon Highlanders, mainly in the Ypres area but also in Northern Italy. Of course, the censor made sure that one never knows exactly where he was, but certain not so subtle hints in his letters give one a good idea.

One short comment in a letter dated in August 1918 is the following: "The poppies in the corn are a beautiful colour just now – and a sort of blue cornflower." Whereas we have a tradition of wearing the red poppy for armistice day, the French, I believe, use the blue cornflower.

His writing at times is graphic and quite shocking, especially to his sister, saving his mother from the more gruesome details, but it gives a fascinating picture of life as a "medic" during the last two years of the war. His sense of humour is maintained through hardship – "I am getting on well here but for the RATS! I had them on my bed last night, the great big brutes. There is a cat, fat as butter, soft, sleek, faultlessly black except when it puts the tip of its tongue out as a sign of appreciation of being petted - but it cares not for rats and sleeps on my cardigan when the pests are walking below the chair! In October 1918 he writes "We are in the line and I have a Regimental Aid Post in a bit of a "dugout" in a field in a hollow. The bed salved out of the nearest village is a mere mattress but has springs and so is very comfortable to sleep on. However the Hun straffes a lot at night & one does not sleep well." But a little later he comments "Last night we had the good news that Ostend, Douai & Lille had been occupied by us - well it is all progress in the right direction."

My father was actually on delayed leave on 11 November 1918. He was not demobbed until May 1919. He had been decorated twice for bravery during the Passchendaele campaign in 1917.

***Neil***

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**A Prayer Diary for December and January** (contributed by Joan Ratcliffe)

**Week beginning 2 December**

Pray for the safety of our friends from Cumbria Boxes of Hope who travel to Romania today to distribute shoe boxes during the week. We pray also for everyone who will receive a shoe box.



**9 December**

The Winter Night Shelter is well under way, so we pray for all who will attend.

**16 December**

Many people go to a church or school Nativity play at this time of year. Pray that something they see or hear may just touch their hearts.

**23 December**

What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

If I were a wise man, I would play my part.

What can I give him? Give my heart.

**30 December**

We look back over the past year with thanks and forwards to the new year with faith.

**6 January**

We pray in preparation for our church meeting next Sunday, and for our ministers and elders.

**13 January**

We remember members and friends of our church who, for various reasons, are no longer able to worship with us in church each Sunday. We ask God's blessing on them and pray that they may know his presence with them.

**20 January**

We focus our prayers around the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which runs from 18 to 25 January.

**27 January**

Today is World Leprosy Day. Pray for all those who suffer with leprosy, for those who work with them, and for those who support the work financially or through prayer.

