

CONTACT

introduces and welcomes

YOU

to

PENWORTHAM

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Jer. 17v 7 (TLB)

‘Blessed are those who trust
in the Lord, and have made the
Lord their hope and confidence’.

Our hope is not in this New Year

but in the Lord
who has made all things new.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

JANUARY 2021

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FELLOWSHIP FOREWORD

Dear Friends,

Let me begin by wishing you all a very happy New Year!



All that 2020 has stood for has now past, and whilst we still face further restrictions and inconveniences we must surely do so with smiles on our faces. I hope and pray that all will improve and bring us back to some form of normality. However, we have probably all learnt something about ourselves during the last twelve months: that we can be more resilient; that we do miss friends and family when we can't physically see them; a greater appreciation of our choices and freedoms; that coping with isolation can be difficult. There have been many changes to our lives during 2020 - and not all of them bad. But for most of us the changes will return (Perhaps even the refunds from Ryanair!).

However, for some of us the changes will be there forever. Whatever, or whoever we have lost, I hope that consolation can be found in those who remain. We can all play our part in this and that's where the "F"

word comes in. Faith. Did we have faith that Brexit would ever end? Probably not Do we have faith that Covid-19 will ever end? We should have

But in the midst of all the changes and uncertainties in the world, three things, as we all know, remain constant and everlasting: faith, hope and love. These are not dependant on trade deals, vaccines or even climate

change. But they are dependent on each one of us committing ourselves to action. Our faith teaches us to hope and instructs us to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. This is as true today as it will be next year, and the next..... But it has been said that "Faith without action is no faith at all."

Let us embrace whatever the future brings and hold on to each other and all those we love. If we can't see each other for a while yet, we can still pray for each other, and telephone, and provide support in whatever way we can.

May God bless you and keep you in his loving and eternal arms; for here we can all find peace and safety from the world and all its strife.

Looking forward in hope, I remain,

With love, *Robert*

FRIENDS AND FAMILY



Bill Bridge who was Paul Bridge's father, sadly passed away peacefully in hospital in November, we send our love and prayers to Paul, Adele and their families.

We ended a rather unusual year by finally meeting together in our church on the 13th and 20th December for a special Christmas service, and it was lovely to see so many of you there.

I would like to thank my partner in crime Beverley for putting together the service, we've had lots of kind words sent via e-mail, phone calls, cards etc, saying how much you all enjoyed the service, and our thanks must also go to our wonderful team of Elders, Robert, Bill, Daniel, Brenda, Gill, Anne and Gillian who have supported Bev and I throughout this pandemic.

On behalf of the Elders, may I wish you all a very HAPPY NEW YEAR and let's hope and pray that 2021 will be a GOOD year for all of us.

Jenny.



THANK YOU

Salvation Army Christmas Appeal.

On behalf of the Elders I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who donated toys, gifts and money to what would have been our Toy Service collection. Gillian Ashurst kindly volunteered to take a car load of presents to the Salvation Army in Preston on 4th December together with donations totalling £248.00. Thank you also to those who took in gifts themselves and made donations directly. Whilst it may not have represented our usual contribution I feel that it was nevertheless a very worthwhile effort.

Thank you again,

Robert

A Message to You All

Trust everyone had an enjoyable Christmas and hopefully here's to a Happy New Year now the vaccines are with us. Special Thanks to Bev/ Jenny and team for putting on 2 Church Services in December. Rounded off the year perfectly, hopefully some more Services will take place in the 2021. Our thoughts go out to those who sadly lost loved ones in 2020. Finally a big Thank You to Junior Church and team, their Christmas Card was really Lovely and very welcome in these trying times.

Derek & Pat Poulton

MESSAGES FROM THE FELLOWSHIP

To all at PURC

I had hoped to see you in person at Church, but this hasn't been possible at the moment. I wanted to send this message to thank you for all the lovely cards, letters, flowers, and messages that you sent to me and my family after Milne passed away.

They are a great comfort to us at this sad time

I wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year and hope to see you soon when we are able to return to Church.

Doris McCutcheon

To all my Church friends,

I would normally leave a Christmas card in the church foyer for all to see, but unfortunately Covid restrictions do not allow this.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for your kind messages, cards, flowers, love and support you have sent to myself and my daughters, since Pat passed away.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year, when hopefully we can all come together in church again.

Best wishes,

Colin Whalley



WOMEN'S GROUP

On behalf of the Women's Group, can I thank Brenda for her time as Secretary and finding so many speakers for us.

Jean Frew

WOMEN'S GROUP BIRTHDAYS

The Women's Group send their best wishes to:

Connie Barnes and Jean Dilworth

who both have a birthday in January

Many Happy Returns *Jean Frew*



AN E-MAIL EXTRACT FROM OUR URC NW SYNOD MODERATOR

31 January 2020

From: Brian Jolly, Synod Moderator

Dear all,

Tier 4 Coronavirus restrictions

It would appear that all churches in this synod are now in Tier 4.

Closing for worship

Although Tier 4 restrictions allow worship to continue in local churches, many have already decided to close for worship because of the risks involved when people gather together [even with social distancing and other Covid secure arrangements in place]. Indeed, for this reason, many churches in the synod that were previously in Tier 3 or Tier 2 have been closed for worship for many months.

The advice of the Synod Moderators is that although gathering for worship continues to be permitted, even in Tier 4,

the safest approach for the time being is for local churches not to provide opportunities for people to gather for worship [other than online].

Thank you

The pressures and stresses of the effects of Covid are impacting upon us all in various ways - some seen, others invisible. These times are hard.

We share faith which declares that light will always shine in darkness.

Thank you for all that you are doing to point to light in the darkness.

Thank you for living the gospel in these difficult times by caring for yourself and supporting others in whatever ways you can - through prayer, conversation on the phone, practical help with shopping if you are able, or whatever. Thank you for the various ways in which you help others to celebrate God always being with us.

This letter comes with prayers as we venture into a new year: prayers that God will bless you and your family, and that through the mission of your local church in these strange and challenging times, God will bless the community in which you live.

Brian

Rev Brian Jolly

Synod Moderator

Elders Note: With heavy hearts your Elders have decided that PURC will follow the advice from synod and remain closed until restrictions are lifted / changed. We will continue to monitor the situation and take advice.

We will continue with our PURC Zoom catch up meetings.

Blessings,

Jenny and Beverley.

A NOTE FROM THE REVEREND NIGEL LEMON

At the Church Meeting almost a year ago, I raised the subject of the conduct of Funeral Services here at Penwortham during the continuing vacancy, particularly as it involved myself. I indicated that it was unlikely that I, responsible then for six such Services of Thanksgiving in the previous two years, could expect to be so fully active into the future. Since we moved here in 2002, I have in fact been involved in some forty services at our Penwortham, Fulwood and Kirkham churches, the vast majority being for URC members.

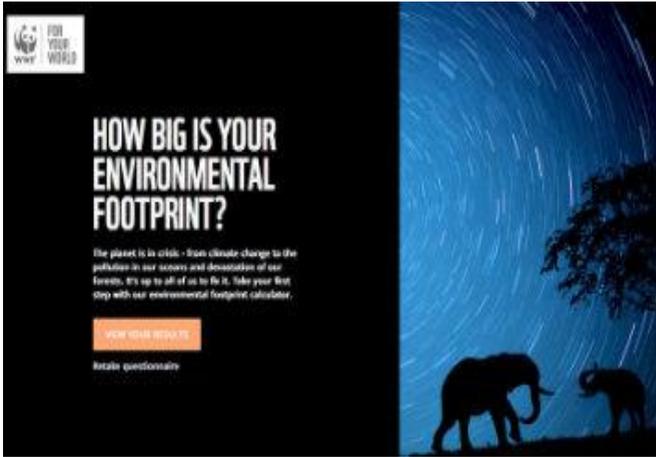
However, the time has now come when, for reasons of both age and health and following discussion among our family, I have decided that I shall conduct no further funeral services with their demanding and concentrated timetables, either at PURC or elsewhere. This has not been an easy decision to make; it has not been taken lightly; for there can be fewer more privileged positions for a minister, or indeed elder, than to meet people pastorally when someone has lost a close relative.

I repeat what I said to the Church Meeting last year: I hope that as our Vacancy continues there will be one or more of our Members, whether or not they are Elders, who would consider being available to lead such services: we have those experienced in leading worship, and members with the necessary personal sensitivity to others. If it is of help, I would be willing to share my own experiences and methods for such services.

I am grateful for the many opportunities that have been mine during these past years, and the trust placed in me regarding these services. And I hope that our future life together as a church, both in the present circumstances and beyond, will find us able to meet this particular need from within the resources of our congregation.

Nigel Lemon
January 2021

ECO CHURCH MISSION



As part of becoming an Eco Church we are asked to engage with a Carbon Footprint Calculator. This year due to Covid 19 our Carbon Footprints (the impact that we have on God's creation) should be relatively low.

Please take part in the audit by clicking on (or copying and pasting) the following link: <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>

The questions asked can make us more aware of how we can adapt our lifestyle to tread more gently on Mother Earth.

Gillian Ashurst

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Jan 2021 Online Retreats led by Donna Worthington

Please use website to apply:

<https://www.christianretreats.live/>

- there are details of further events there too.

Sun 10th Jan, 6.30pm: Entering the Heart of Christ

Sat 16th Jan, 2pm (or 18.01.20, 9.30am):

The Healing of The Blind Man

Fri 22nd Jan, 2pm: The Tiger & The Tree of Light

Wed 27th Jan, 9.30am: The Woman Who Anointed Jesus
and The Celtic Story of The Selkie



POEMS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Just One Request

Dear Master for this coming year
Just one request I bring:
I do not pray for happiness,
Or any earthly thing—
I do not ask to understand
The way Thou ledest me,
But this I ask: Teach me to do
The thing that pleaseth Thee.
I want to know Thy guiding voice,
To walk with Thee each day.
Dear Master make me swift to hear
And ready to obey.
And thus the year I now begin
A happy year will be—
If I am seeking just to do
The thing that pleaseth Thee.

--Unknown Author

His Unfailing Presence

Another year I enter
Its history unknown;
Oh, how my feet would tremble
To tread its paths alone!
But I have heard a whisper,
I know I shall be blest;
"My presence shall go with thee,
And I will give thee rest."
What will the New Year bring me?
I may not, must not know;
Will it be love and rapture,
Or loneliness and woe?
Hush! Hush! I hear His whisper;
I surely shall be blest;
"My presence shall go with thee,
And I will give thee rest."

--Unknown Author



Revelation Ch5 v 1-10

A NEW YEAR REFLECTION

A WORD FOR THE NEW YEAR

'A land of hills and valleys.' Deuteronomy 11:11 NKJV

This year you will face some mountains and go through some valleys. And you need both. The strength gained from climbing and conquering your last mountain is what will get you through your next valley. It's in the valley that the sweetest fruit grows. That's because it's watered by streams that flow from the mountains. Jesus said, 'By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples' (John 15:8 NKJV). This year Jesus wants you to be more fruitful in His service. And He tells you how-. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing' (John 15: 4-5 NKJV). What kind of fruit is God looking for in your life this year? Paul tells us.- 'When we live God's way...He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard - things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely' (Galatians 5:22-23 MSG). So this year when you face a mountain or go through a valley, remember that God is with you.

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WORLD PRAYER NEWS

South Asia - Bangladesh Floods

Please pray for the continued recovery and rebuilding in Bangladesh, following the heavy seasonal rains in September 2020 which triggered flooding that have inundated 40% of the country. The flood was described as the 'worst flooding' since 1998. Pray for all the humanitarian organisation which were involved in the relief efforts, and for the people of Bangladesh who are having to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. Pray that the Lord's presence would be tangible for the affected people. (Mission Aviation Fellowship - UK)

South East Africa - Malawi Bible Explorer Class

Praise God for the good health of all the Bible Explorer class trainers, and that they have been able to return to visiting schools, teaching the Bible to hundreds of children. Pray for God's guidance in 2021, that He will enable us to reach more schools and districts in Malawi. Pray that the 'clean hands' project is well implemented in the schools and that participation of the children is good. Pray that all those in schools are protected from Covid-19. (Starfish Malawi)

Middle East - Kurdistan Refugees

There are at least 17 refugee camps housing many thousands of Yazidi refugees who escaped from Sinjar in 2014 when ISIS overran the area. Many of these refugees has been there ever since. Some of them are young women who were held as sex slaves or traded among fighters as "wives". Our partners are actively involved in some of these camps bringing relief, healing and the hope of the gospel and small churches are being planted. Please pray that our partners will continue to have access to the camps and that many will find a sense of hope among the hopelessness and find Christ as their Lord.

West Africa - Sierra Leone Hands of Dorcas training project

We thank God for the Hands of Dorcas tailoring training project. We pray for the women taking part that as they develop their skills, they will also grow in confidence, be able to earn a living and that those who aren't Christians yet will want to learn more about Jesus (International Aid Trust)

above with permission of - www.globalconnections.org.uk

URC COMMITMENT FOR LIFE EXTRACT

A Report from Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (IOPT)

Al Khan al Ahmar Village, Palestine

In 2019 representatives of the URC the village of Al Khan al Ahmar. The URC was warmly welcomed, thanked, and fed. We learned about the vital importance of the village to the feasibility of the two-state solution.

Very recently, The Israeli High Court heard a petition calling for the immediate demolition of Al Khan al Ahmar and its celebrated “car tyres” school. The court imposed a four-month period of delay for the demolition, but with no injunction against the demolition orders. This means that the bulldozers may move in at any moment. Due to this emergency, the Bedouin has asked for international support. Jahalin Solidarity has been working tirelessly on the issue.

Ordinary people who are concerned can do a number of things. Firstly, we can sign the online petition, at <https://www.icc.jahalin.org>. Over 24,200 people have joined Jahalin Solidarity in calling on the ICC judges to uphold Palestinian rights. They believe that the forcible displacement of Al Khan al Ahmar and other villages in Area C is a war crime.

Secondly, we can speak to our representatives and ask what they can do to call the Israeli State to account for its actions.

Thank you for your support for Commitment for Life as we work together for justice, peace and equity in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.



News in from Diana Paulding:
2019 URC Youth Representative
on the URC IOPT trip &
Commitment for Life supporter
Thank you so much to
Commitment for Life for your
support this past year of the
Christian Aid Prophetic Activists'
'Stop Fuelling the Fire'
campaign.

We petitioned the government to
end the use of UK Export
Finance to fund fossil fuel
projects overseas. Over a
thousand people signed the
petition and many people
contacted their MPs to raise
their concerns about the issue.
We went to Downing Street on
Friday 4th December 2020 with a
coalition of organisations for a
socially distanced 'hand-in'
event of all of our petitions.
Thank you for everything you
have done to help the
campaign!

ANDREW CLELLAND'S SIBERIAN LIFE - AUTUMN TERM 2020

Hello again from a very cold and snowy Novosibirsk! It's currently -18°C outside, relatively mild considering it was -28 a few days ago. It has been over four months since I arrived back here after spending two months at home during the summer. The pandemic meant that I met with very few people over the summer.

Despite a negative test result, Russian rules required that I remained in a special quarantine room for two weeks in August. There were three of us in this special block, guarded at one end by a security guard, and at the other by a locked door, so for two weeks we were confined to our rooms. There was no Wi-fi, so no meaningful work could be carried out. Before quarantine, I managed to buy two weeks' food and water from the shop and nipped to my old room to get clothes.

After the two weeks I received another negative test result and was back out into the real world, to be met with all the administrative challenges of registering for my second year. Another lung x-ray had to be carried out to check that I hadn't caught TB over the past year; I submitted my passport to extend my visa, and I had to deal with my pass being blocked when information submitted was not passed on!

All classes this semester began offline, only returning online at the end of October; it was good to see my course mates. Five of the six of us are currently in Russia, which is a fair return considering the travel restrictions, and the sixth is stuck in French Guiana. This semester we've had four modules, energy economic, oil and gas project assessment, enterprise risk management and business analysis. We should have had a trip to the "nearby" (ten hours drive away) oil field but instead we visited the oil and gas geological and geophysics museum

Despite the pandemic, this semester has brought about several new opportunities. An interview by a Siberian universities online journal about being a British student living in Novosibirsk and working for the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. I met with the Head of the International Affairs Department to create a plan of an excursion around Academy institutes in four different cities for young British scientists. Hopefully we'll go to Moscow next year to pitch for funding. As a thank you he gave me a jar of honey from Altai region (Russia's equivalent of the Lake District). Following this, I have done research on English language sources for two different articles.

ANDREW CLELLAND'S SIBERIAN LIFE - CONT'D

This year I'm living in the same flat as before, with the same flatmates, Max and Aldar. However, at the end of September, Aldar had to leave uni for not paying his fees. Last year he'd been granted a "budget place" where the state pays his fees, however after not achieving the required grades he'd lost the funding and was therefore expelled. The number of international students this year has dramatically decreased, especially as European unis won't insure students to carry out a year abroad in Russia.

I spent a lot of time, whilst the weather was still warm, walking in the botanical gardens, round parks in the city centre and going to the zoo, which happens to be the biggest in Russia. Now that the weather has turned slightly chilly, long walks can't take place quite as often, although it's not yet cold enough to be wearing my big Siberian winter coat.

Orthodox churches have been open since early summer and are fully back to normal, with the exception of congregational singing. As New Year is the main celebration in Russia and Christmas is celebrated on the 6th January, there are unfortunately few religious signs around the city. Within the churches themselves there are few indications that a major event is about to take place. Even in a non-pandemic year, there would be no nativity sets, no carol or Christingle services, with just a single additional service on Orthodox Christmas.

Max and I have decorated the flat for New Year with snowflakes, lights and tinsel which adds some festive cheer. This holiday season I'm staying in Novosibirsk, it's far too risky to go to either Moscow or St Petersburg, and the idea of four weeks' quarantine (two at either end) if I return to the UK and potential difficulties re-entering Russia is unappealing. I am also participating in the Russian Economic Congress on the 25th December.



I hope you all stay safe this Christmas time and I look forward to catching up with you next summer. I wish you a very blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year, let's hope that 2021 brings some good tidings. *Andrew Clelland*





An Issue With Names



Just like the London music venue
Was a man called Albert Hall,
An ordinary name for a fellow to have
Yet amusing to one and all.

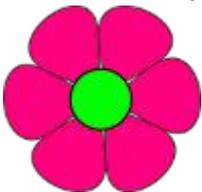
We've recently heard of a quirky pairing,
Dual surnames of a couple just married.
He was called White, she was called Christmas,
About jokes that followed neither were worried.

There are names most peculiar, it has to be said,
When changing one's name due to wedlock,
My aunt thus became Minnie Murgatroyd,
No problem to her marriage, no deadlock.

When copying a name, some may be very careless,
Such was the singer Engelbert Humperdinck,
Copied off the writer of Hansel and Gretel
Or was the aim to make people think?

There's a film star by the name of Jane Seymour,
Henry eighth's wife was also Jane S.
We can't tell how many share it.
Impossible to hazard a guess.

A lady we know is wed to Bob Hope,
Not the once famed comic actor,
All these folks share an issue with names.
A peculiar common factor



Hyl̄da Hurst



CARTOONS



CONTACT

Dear Reader

"Contact" is being published as usual on our Website (minus any personal/pastoral news not confirmed for general publication) :

see: www.penworthamurc.org.uk

If you have anything you would like to contribute to "CONTACT" it will be most welcome - send by e-mail to purcmagweb@talktalk.net or a text to 07538976140 or call Alan Edward on 01772740129; or deliver your contribution to 27 Hazel Close.

Many thanks to all those who are contributing.

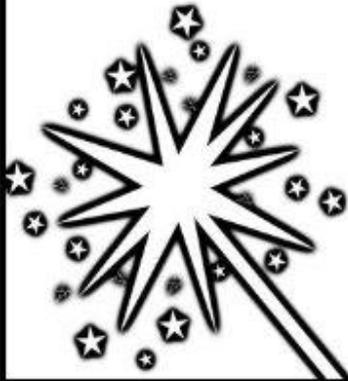
Next submission date will be : 24 January

The next issue for 2021 is due out on 31 January

Wishing you every blessing in 2021

Ed.

Happy



2021



And whatever you do, in word or deed, do
everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.
~ Colossians 3:17