News from the NW Synod 11th January 2017

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- 1: Moderators Snapshot As the new year gets underway Church life moves into a different

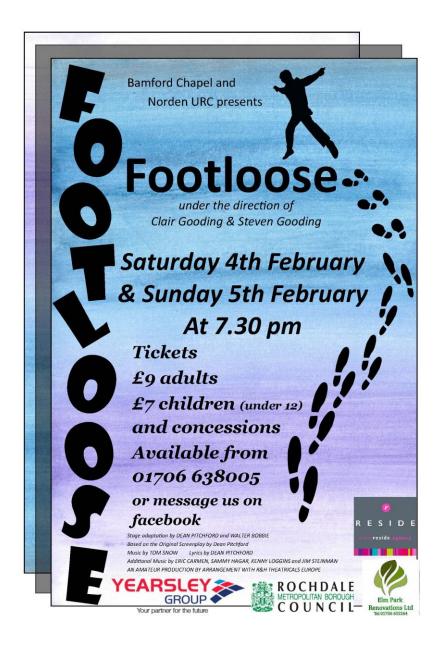


gear. The trappings of Christmas are packed away and we are left with the Gospel of God incarnate, with Jesus Christ calling those earliest people from different walks of life to "come, follow me" as disciples and his enduring call heard in contemporary society for us as disciples today to be salt and light in the

world. My picture this week (unlike recent snapshots by journalists you cannot decipher the scribblings on our papers thanks to my unsteady hand) is of our Lancashire Synod Area Pastoral Meeting formed of those who freely give of their time to support our congregations in the Lancashire Area. The core of every meeting "agenda" is time spent hearing from each member of the committee and the link they have with the different congregations. Each of our congregations, bearing the light of Christ, face different challenges and our prayers and concern are for the way in which we can strengthen that partnership we have in the Gospel. Please pray for:

- each of our four Synod Area Pastoral Committees in South, Central, Lancashire, and Cumbria and the support they seek to foster within each Synod Area
- the process which is underway to identify new conveners for the South, Central and Lancashire Areas and for the Synod Pastoral Committee

- the pattern of support our congregations can provide to one another in prayer and practical ways
- the opportunities for new mission ventures that can happen as we share Good News stories of
 what is taking place in other communities which encourage us and point to new ways of being
 salt and light.
- 2: Request to borrow cassocks for Footloose Production Bamford Chapel and Norden URC, Rochdale are performing Footloose on 4th and 5th of February 2017, we require a few more cassocks for the Choir. We would really appreciate if anyone has a cassock they would be willing to lend us can contact Carole Greaves on 0791 346 4995 or greaves.carolefrank@btopenworld.com. They will be returned straight after the show. All are invited to come and watch, see poster for details.



3: Vacancy for a North Western Synod representative to serve as a member of Mission Council Rev Mike Walsh has completed a three-year term as a member of Mission Council representing this synod. Nominations or self-nominations of ministers or elders from Lancashire and Central Areas willing to serve on Mission Council for the period 2017 - 2019 are sought by the synod executive committee, and should be sent to the synod clerk (clerk@nwsynod.org.uk), from whom further details can be obtained, by 25 January.

4: Christmas at Clitheroe URC At Clitheroe URC there were 6 stations set up with volunteers who told the story of the nativity.



At each station there was something practical for participants to engage with.

A class of pupils from 2 local primary schools visited us and enjoyed 'Experiencing Christmas'.

The stations were also used by adults as a quiet guided contemplation during our weekly midweek service.

We are hoping to repeat this next year with the same schools and to invite others.

We will also be holding a similar event at Easter.





5: Youth Assembly 2017 Are you, or do you have in your church) a young person (14-25)? There are still places available for Youth Assembly 2017 – conference costs will be paid by the Synod, young people just need to get there (and there is a local coach pick up!)

Details here: http://www.urc.org.uk/discipleship/childrens-and-youth/urcya.html

6: United Nations Youth Assembly Ali Greaves (Bamford Chapel URC) is jetting off to New York straight after URC Youth Assembly as she has been selected as a UK Youth Ambassador to the UNYA in February.

Ali is writing a blog about her experiences which you can read here: https://seeingtheworldfromanaeroplanewindow.wordpress.com/

Here is an extract from her latest post:

"The reality of my adventure is starting to set in. I am very much struggling to sit still and every time someone mentions New York or the United Nations that's me hitting the ceiling with excitement again......

Things have started to happen. Plans are no longer just plans they are happening!

This week I have been counting rather a lot of Lego bricks and made a fair few Lego houses in preparation for my visit to primary schools as well as meeting some local councillors to see how they can help. My church holds a community coffee morning every Thursday (Bamford Chapel and Norden URC 10am-12 noon) which is where I met three councillors. Councillor Ian Duckworth has very rapidly put into place actions to help me along my way, with funding, support and even a bit of press...... Yes I have been interviewed by my local paper and even had hundreds of pictures taken to go with the article. So local people look out. Kinda crazy stuff.

This week too I have a had a meeting (well lunch and chatting) with my three fellow travellers about when I venture off to Tanzania shortly after I get back from New York. We have got to planning the activities and skills we are going to take out with us when we visit a Safe House-a large house for girls who are fleeing FGM so they can live, safety, during the "cutting season" and can gain an education as well as how to become self-sufficient if they cannot return back to their families. Very successful afternoon to say the least. Several bakewell tarts consumed too.

First Skype call ever made this week too! Had a great chat with Grace from the URC (United Reformed Church). She works for the joint Public Issues Team, a group representing the Church of Scotland, Methodist, Baptist and URC Church's on social, political environmental issues effecting the UK. We spoke about what exactly it is I am going to do while I am away and what it means to me as a young Christian to do this. I have also been invited to speak with Grace at a Synod (area in church terms) meeting to talk about the URCs' environmental policy. Sounds great to me. As well as some other bits and bobs Grace

reminded me that I should throw myself into this 100% as I am a little worried this becomes about me rather than about what I am doing but as she said personal stories inspire more people than anything else so here is mine I suppose.

Ali"

7: URC Big Day Out 2017 Not to be confused with the North Western/Mersey Synods Big Day Out in July... the URC is holding a great Big Day Out at Warwick Castle on May 20th. The day is for EVERYONE – not just children and young people and activities, worship and speakers are being specially designed to ensure that everyone who comes will find something fun and interesting to do and, of course, get the chance to look around Warwick Castle!

Prices and booking details are here: http://www.urc.org.uk/discipleship/childrens-and-youth/current-events/2188-planning-underway-for-pilots-big-day-out-2017.html

Maybe you could organize a coach with some of the other churches in your area? Invite ecumenical friends along – it's going to be a fantastic day.

8: CORE Skills Training for Children's Workers Leo Roberts (Children and Youth Development Officer) is running a course in Bolton starting at the end of February. The 6-session course is free of charge and is designed to help anyone who works with children as part of their ministry in the Church including junior church leaders, uniformed organisation leaders and just those who have an interest in children's work.

A flyer giving the dates and further details can be downloaded from here: https://app.box.com/files/0/f/0/1/f 120688598559

Please support and encourage those who do this work on our behalf to come along. It's free!

If you would like a CORE Skills course run at your church, please contact Leo Roberts

9: Rev John Fuller We have received news of the death of Rev John Fuller on Monday 9 January. John was living in retirement in Kirkby Lonsdale, with his wife Jean.

John trained at Westminster College, was ordained in 1949, and served at Trinity, Clapham Road (1949-52) and Blackheath (1952-61).

The funeral service will be at St Mary's Church, Kirkby Lonsdale, on Tuesday 24 January at 1pm.

Brian Jolly Clerk, North Western Synod