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- 1: Moderators Snapshot



Anniversary celebrations are so important for us in many aspects of our life. Last Sunday morning I had the delight of worshipping with the congregation at Greenmount URC as they mark their 150 year anniversary this year, and were joined by their sister congregation at Dundee URC. It wasn't possible to have fireworks (after all, it was daylight) and so party poppers were the next best thing to assist the celebration (top image). The congregation launched a very special collaborative project to mark their anniversary – a new Communion table fall. Every member of the congregation was invited to stitch a small cross onto the fall, and a beautiful prepared cross will be added at the final stage. In the meantime there will be plenty of community opportunities for others to add a stitched cross – and everyone was invited to sign a book, which in turn records the cross they stitched (in the image the creative designer Val Maden, with Kath Lonsdale adding her stitch). Please pray:

- with thanksgiving to God for the life and vitality of each of our congregations, for the years that are past and the expectancy of the years ahead
- for those creative opportunities for celebration which enable others in our communities to rejoice with us and discover the wonder of Christ at work in us
- for our Synod as 128 congregations seek to support one another in prayer and a variety of ways – to sustain our worship and witness in each community
- for the strengthening of relationships with other churches in each community, that together our work and witness to Jesus Christ may be even more fruitful

2: The “pop up cafe” by members of FORTON URC is becoming an annual



weekend event in early February. Customers at "Robinson's Seeds and Plants" welcome a hot drink and homemade cake as they come to stock up for gardens and allotments at "Potato Weekend". The "pop up cafe" is a cosy little cabin at Forton, up from the A6 road and convenient for the M6. However, it is open for just one weekend. Thrilled at raising £250 for Church funds, the servers in their URC aprons are again catering on May 1st. This time they will be serving lunches in Forton Village Hall to members and friends of the Flag

Pastorate. The annual May Day Ramble to FORTON URC has become so popular, the Church is hiring a bigger hall, across from their own little Church in the village. The Church and garden will be open as a peaceful place to relax before and after lunch. Anyone interested in a May Day country outing, please contact the Forton URC Secretary.

3: BIG DAY OUT 2017 you may be aware that North Western Synod are holding another **Big Day Out**, together with Mersey Synod. It is on **Saturday 8th July** from 10.00 am at Southport Convention Centre

Tickets cost £8 for adults before 17th April, and after that date they will be £10 each; children 16 years and under have free entry. Please note that, although there is no cost for children to attend the day, they will need to book a ticket.

The programme will include:

Speakers:

- ❖ **Revd John Proctor** - Acts: The Church in Action
- ❖ **Revd Steve Chalke** - The Church and Peace-making Initiatives
- ❖ **Revd Richard Church** - Walking the Way
- ❖ **Revd Andrew Roberts** - Holy Habits
- ❖ **Lawrence Moore**
- ❖ **Grace Pengelly**

Workshops:

- ❖ **Dementia – awareness in worship & work within the community**
- ❖ **Developing the Church in the community**
- ❖ **Gathering and telling stories**
- ❖ **Puppets in worship**
- ❖ **The Naked Vicar**
- ❖ **Magic/clowning**
- ❖ **Art in worship**
- ❖ **Drama**
- ❖ **Crafty Christians & Fun Science**

Each church is asked to bring a large sealed envelope which publicises their own church. The outside of the envelope may be decorated in any way that you would like – but please do not put the name of your church on the outside of the envelope. Inside the envelope please put the name of your church and any interesting information you would like to share about it. The intention is that each church will take a different church envelope away with them at the end of the day, and perhaps make links with that church after the event.

Stewards are urgently required for half a day, or more. Half day stewards will pay only £4 for a ticket. Please contact Synod Office to volunteer.

This will be a great day for all ages, please advertise the Big Day Out in your church. *Tickets can be booked via Synod Office now - phone 0161 789 5583 or email admin@nwsynod.org.uk* Booking form and flyer attached to the email

4: Bolton Methodist Mission Victoria Hall, Knowsley Street, Bolton. **FACILITIES MANAGER**, Responsible for the building, events, staff management and customer care. 30 hours per week including some evenings and weekends. Salary £17,000 to £18,750. For Application Pack email: bmmvictoriahall@gmail.com Closing date 10 March 2017

5: Hospital chaplaincy Royal Bolton Hospital working half day a week at Royal Bolton Hospital. The web link for the advert and to enter an application is below:

http://jobs.boltonft.nhs.uk/job/UK/Lancashire/Bolton/Bolton_NHS_Foundation_Trust/Chaplaincy/Chaplaincy-v636757?ts=3420

6: Manchester Passion – Saturday 8th April 2017



7: March Synod

At the March Synod (**Bamford Chapel, March 25th**) much of our time will be spent discussing the ways our churches engage with 'Jesus values' and how ministry might be able to support them in this. The decisions we eventually take will affect all our congregations, including children and young people - the future ministers, Church Secretaries, and worship leaders for our congregations. Children and Youth Development Officer, Leo Roberts, will be leading a session in the morning for young people exploring what the future might look like in our synod. In the afternoon the young people will be invited to take part in the debate – although they will not be able to vote.

We are hoping that, in order to involve as many young people (yr 7 and above) as possible in the debate, you will publicise this opportunity to the young people in your church and bring them to synod.

In order to allocate resources, would you please email Leo on cydo@nwsynod.org.uk with numbers.

8: StarPoint Conference – Hungary, 25-29 July.

The Reformed Church in Hungary would like to invite the youth of your church to the eighth meeting of the biennial Csillagpont (Starpoint) festival 25-29 July, 2017 in Debrecen. Join in community with young Christians from around the Carpathian Basin and around the world! Starpoint is a gathering designed for youth by youth. Around 600 volunteers have worked to create an exciting festival for young believers to come together and discuss different issues that they face in today's society. Starpoint has several activities geared toward young adults including music concerts, seminars, small-group discussions and informal time for fellowship with new friends. This year Starpoint Festival is joining the memorial Year of Reformation by choosing Reformation as the theme. The Reformation wasn't something which happened just once, a long time ago. This is a process, which did not come to an end 500 years ago, but is still happening now. Ours is a faith that is always reforming. We hope to help the youth think of the Reformation not merely as an outdated event, but as a current idea which has meaning for them. We want the youth to be proud of this and we want Reformation to be a part of their

everyday life. The program also seeks to engage in current events in secular culture as being Christian means we must engage with society at large.

Program Outline 23rd July-25th July Special programme in Budapest for international guests
25th July- 29th July Starpoint Festival in Debrecen 29th July Afternoon Transfer back to Budapest
30th July Departure for home

Accommodation is provided for the delegates in Budapest for the two nights before and the night after the festival.

The RCH will cover the full cost (local expenses) for two delegates (ages 18-26) from each partner church. Unfortunately, our church is not able to assist with the international travel expenses to Hungary and so the flight cost will be the responsibility of your church. If other young people from your church are interested in attending, please contact the RCH Ecumenical Office directly as places are limited.

The full cost includes the registration fee, regional transportation, on-site accommodation, three meals a day, programmes and a welcome package. We strongly encourage all those who are interested to visit our website (<http://csillagpont2015.reformatus.hu/>) and explore the photos, videos and information from previous Starpoint events. Please take some time to research the opportunity and benefits that this festival provides

North Western Synod will provide finance towards the cost of the flight. If you are interested, or know someone in your church who might be, please contact URC CYW Office by **Friday 10 March** on children.youth@urc.org.uk

9: Darwen Asylum Refugee Enterprise



The Synod was delighted to be able to pass on the gift of a Microsoft X Box to DARE: Darwen Asylum Refugee Enterprise.

John East, Church Secretary said, "A fantastic gift from the NW Synod which will give many happy hours of entertainment at the Drop In held at Central URC Darwen on Wednesday's."

Catherine says: "We can't wait to play together on the X-Box. All children love to play, and games give us a shared language while we learn English."

Pix shows Darwen Pastorate, Minister, Rev Catherine Lewis Smith with two young Afghan asylum seekers.

10: The CYDO Grand Tour



The first church to contact Leo, the synod's Children and Youth Development Officer, to invite him to visit on his 'Grand Tour' was Hurst Nook URC in Ashton-Under-Lyne. He was delighted to pop in to their Tots group and meet the volunteers, parents – and tots. In the 12 years the project has been operating they have catered for over 620 children – and sometimes have to operate a waiting list! The project meets in two rooms – the sanctuary, where there is a large space for soft play, and the hall which is the 'table top' room with Lego, Duplo and art materials. After an hour of free play, the children (and a surprising number of adults, are served drinks and crackers with cheese, before meeting altogether for songs or a story before heading home.

Leo said "I know that there are groups like this in so many churches in the Synod offering support to parents and carers and providing opportunities for the youngest in our society to develop social skills

that will stand them in good stead as they progress to school-age. I am looking forward to visiting more projects for both children and young people as the invitations come in" Leo can be contacted on cydo@nwsynod.org.uk . He doesn't bite.

11: Death of Revd Graham John Knights

I am sorry to inform you of the death of Graham John Knights on 21 February 2017.

Graham served at:

Ystalyfera & Ystradgynlais 1993 – 96;
Emmanuel & Wycliffe, Leicester 1996 -2000;
Fylde & Wyre Pastorate 2000 – 07;
Hambleton & Poulton-le-Fylde 2011 -13.

There will be a memorial service at Torrisholme Methodist Church on Friday March 3rd commencing at 12:30. Refreshments will served after in the church hall. Family asks that bright colours worn and donations made to cancer research.

Brian Jolly, Synod Clerk