
News from the NW Synod 19th April 2017

Newsletter



Please remember to book your tickets for the North Western/Mersey Synod Big Day Out £10 an adult ticket...children go free!

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1: Moderators Snapshot This week I enjoyed a delightful post-Easter gathering with some of the retired ministers and spouses in the Central Area, organised by Kath Lonsdale, at St George's and St Andrew's URC in Bolton together with our new Central Area Pastoral Committee Convener Revd Nigel Adkinson. The Revd Andrew Lonsdale joined us and gave an inspiring account of the sabbatical he and Kath shared a few years ago, generously illustrated through the use of photographs in a PowerPoint presentation. Their sabbatical took them to many famous pilgrimage destinations which provided an enriching experience and gave them much to reflect on and, in turn, to be refreshed by through their travels. We all know how easy it is to be a church of "doing" and lose sight of our "being" as Christians and as a journeying People of God – and Andrew's sabbatical reflections gave us insight into how the very different forms of Christian spirituality all contained the capacity to aid a recovery of that "being".

Please pray for:

- our continuing renewal as a people who are called to be disciples of a risen Christ
- the great variety of ministries which we are given "so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12) and the development of the breadth of these ministries within the North Western Synod
- all who in retirement continue to faithfully bear the light of Christ in their lives and to their communities, and who at times themselves need to be carried by the company of God's People.
- the United Reformed Church that it may balance our call to "doing" with a deepening sense of our "being" in Christ



2: News from Alkington & Providence URC



Above are photos from our Easter Weekend and Reformation Display. One is of some of our young people with one of the reformation banners, explaining how it came to Britain and the other is of our Easter cross and the martyrs tree. The martyrs tree has a star with the name for every person who was martyred during the Reformation. During the weekend we welcomed

visitors from Blackpool, Liverpool and Whitworth who came to see the display and enjoyed an afternoon of fellowship.

3: CYDO Grand Tour In the lead up to Easter Leo was invited to visit 3 churches which are developing links with their community.

The Church At The Centre in Tonge Moor, with the help of Alison Dalton (Church Related Community Work Minister) is involved with “Generation Reunited”. Based at Tonge Children’s Centre, the church is always looking for links to develop its involvement with the community.



Generation Reunited is run by Domina from ‘Precious Gems’ with volunteers (and members!) from The Church At The Centre. It aims to bring together children, parents, grandparents along with volunteers to get generations talking to each other so that each can learn what living is like for different generations in Tonge Moor. Not an explicitly Christian group, the fact that so many volunteers and participants are from the church means that questions about faith can be answered if asked – and one of the mums has started to come to church on Sundays, too.

The sessions starts with food (NOT the reason Leo was there!) and includes conversation, play and craft. With Easter just around the corner when Leo visited Easter baskets were being made – including chocolate eggs. Leo didn’t make one – but was presented with one, so he left happy.

Later that week Leo was up in west Cumbria to attend two children’s Easter services being offered by Revd. Dave Harkison. The first was for the Girls’ Brigade at **Workington URC**. Despite it being GB, most of the participants were lads (although they have to leave when they get to age 10)

The service was based around The Bible Society’s “Super Cool Story Of Jesus” complete with video (<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/easter/the-super-cool-story-of-jesus/>) and included some simple songs and prayers that were judged just right for the age group of the Girls’ Brigade Company (and even the parents and church members who attended enjoyed it!) It was only 15 minutes or so long and then it was back to the hall for drinks and cakes.

Anne, the Company Captain, explained that, as there was no organisation for boys at the church, they were able to attend GB.



The following morning, Dave was leading the same worship to the parents and toddlers at **Cockermouth URC**. This group has been meeting for about 18 months and is going from strength to strength. Nancy and Katrina, church members who run the session, are available to provide drinks and biscuits to parents – and there is a snack break built into the session. The group has access to a whole range of soft play activities that are stored in the newly created 'Messy room' (pic) which used to be a store cupboard but has been refurbished to allow for messy crafts to be offered.

Leo is still hoping to be invited to many more churches to visit their children and youth work provision. He doesn't need to be fed and is happy to sit in a corner and watch or lead a part of a session. He can be contacted on cydo@nwsynod.org.uk

4: CORE Skills for Children's Workers Junior Church staff at Rose Hill URC in Bolton are two thirds of the way through this six session course. Each session is standalone but, together, build up a knowledge of many issues that are useful for those who work with children, or are interested in working with children. The topics covered are Child Development, Team Work, Programme Planning, Children and Community, Pastoral Awareness and The Bible and Prayer.

Each session last less than two hours and can be run for groups of 6 or more. Many churches, like Rose Hill, invite friends from other local churches of different denominations to the sessions – it's always good to share experiences with friends, and find out that the challenges you face are faced by other denominations, too!

If your church would be interested in hosting a CORE Skills course (and they're free of charge!) contact the Synod's Children And Youth Development Officer, Leo Roberts, at cydo@nwsynod.org.uk.