

NEWS FROM THE NW SYNOD 20TH DECEMBER 2017



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1: Moderators snapshot



Last week I attended an exciting meeting in Workington (Cumbria) exploring the way in which a URC team with me will be part of the (especially ecumenical) Archbishop of York's annual mission to a different diocese each year. The mission "Moving Mountains" will take place across Cumbria next March and the teams will include those brought by Methodist District Chairs, the Chair of Methodist Conference, URC Moderators (4 of us), and one of the Moderators of General Assembly.

The snapshot also connects with Cumbria, and the Ecumenical Pilgrimage I co-led back in March this year. Whilst out there one of the pilgrims introduced us to some olive wood producers in Bethlehem which his company, Lakeland, have dealings with. As a gift to the pilgrimage leaders (Bishop James Newcombe of Carlisle, Revd Richard Teal the Cumbria Methodist District Chair, and myself) Martin offered each of us a complete set of nativity figures to be used and displayed by us. For Bishop James it is relatively easy when you have a Cathedral at your disposal. Richard and I don't – so we will be more creative in our use. Over the coming years the figures will travel with me round the Synod during the season of Advent – but I wanted you all to be able to see the fabulous gift this year that I accepted on our behalf, and mark the generosity that lies behind the gift. (the figures stand approx. 12 inches high, made of olive wood)

Please pray for:

- "peace and goodwill" to prevail in the land of Jesus' birth, and for reconciliation and renewal between those living in the Holy Land to mark 2018
- the "ordinary" people in the Holy Land who seek to live in fractured communities, and especially those who rely on tourism to provide an income for their families
- the ecumenical county of Cumbria as the churches gear up for the "Moving Mountains" mission next March, and for all the coordination and preparation involved
- our Synod congregations as they provide opportunities for communities this Christmas to focus on "the reason for the season" and for individuals to meet the Light of the World

- those who will struggle this Christmas, and for all who will provide care and compassion to those pushed to the edges of our society.

May I wish you all a very joyous Christmas and may you know the blessing of Immanuel, the Saviour of the World, in the midst of all your celebrations.

Andrew

2: Christingles at Christmas



On Monday 4th. December, 65 children, from Victoria Infant School came to Trinity and learned about the meaning of the Christingle as they made their own Christingle. They thought about what spoiled our world and how God sent Jesus that first Christmas to show his love and to give us a new start. After lighting the candle and singing, Still the Night, they enjoyed some refreshments. A lovely morning shared with the children and staff.

3: General Assembly 2018 The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church will next meet from Friday 6 July to Monday 9 July 2018.

Ministers and Elders wishing to express an interest in representing North Western Synod are asked to be in touch with the Synod Clerk (before Friday 5 January 2018).

4: There is such a thing as a free mince pie Christmas is a very expensive time of



year so it is good to be able to report something that is being given away for free. Members of Chorley United Reformed Church have been giving away mince pies, chocolates and Christmas cards outside Poundland.

The minister Rev Martin Whiffen said "This Christmas is going to be difficult for many people, so we wanted to spread some Christmas cheer and say that not everything about Christmas has to be expensive. In fact, the best value this Christmas is to be found in church. You can enjoy a carol service or a Christingle and all it will cost you is a

small donation in the offering bag. "

The church has been giving out mince pies, chocolates and Christmas cards on Tuesday and Saturday outside Poundland. The last distribution will be on Tuesday 19th December from 10am to noon.

5: Office Christmas closure



Please note that the North Western Synod office will be closed for Christmas from Noon on Friday 22nd December 2017 until Wednesday 3rd January 2018 at 9.15am.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kerry & Hazel