



Sheffield Group News

February 2017

**“See, the winter is past;
the rains are over and
gone. Flowers appear
on the earth; the season
of singing has come...”
Song of Solomon 2:
verses 11-12”**

Say it with flowers...

“What a wondrous time is spring...when all the flowers are blooming,” - Lovely words from the song “it only takes a spark...” by Kurt Kaiser. They encapsulate the beauty and hopefulness of the coming spring season, as we see signs of new life beginning to emerge all around us.

At our recent Steering Group we had an interesting discussion about flowers; perhaps we take them for granted but they play a huge role in our lives. We see them tied to lampposts to mark tragedies, we send, give and wear them in times of thankfulness, sadness, celebration, welcome, appreciation and remembrance. In our church life they link to worship, pastoral care and evangelism: taking a bunch is an excuse to visit someone on the fringe, cheer a sick member and show appreciation to the worship leader (or their wife!). We use them to celebrate motherhood, Easter, Harvest Christmas. A flower festival is a great way of bringing people into our building and they enhance the surroundings in which we worship, reminding us of God’s goodness and creative power.

Jesus invited us to consider their beauty; to remind ourselves that we bear a similar glory in our humanity and this makes us particularly cared for and valued by God, our Father (Matthew 6:28). The Psalmist reminds us of this fleeting glory so we build our lives in dependence on God’s purposes (Psalm 103: 15). Paul uses the picture of flowers to help us imagine the glory of the resurrection life that awaits us (I Corinthians 15). The writer of the Song of Solomon celebrates the coming of flowers in spring as a sign of God’s love continuously renewing our lives: “For look, the winter is past...flowers appear on the earth...” (Song of Solomon 2: 10-13).

It is easy to fall into hopelessness at the state of the world, the church and our lives - but spring is a sign that God is always making everything new. Landscapes at the end of the Great war were quickly transformed as swathes of poppies sprung up; so His love transforms landscapes of death, despair and darkness into something glorious. He invites us to walk with Him in that newness that we bear in our human glory: “Arise my beautiful one and come with me...” Is all the activity in this Bulletin a sign that the “winter” of the church and this world is also soon coming to an end?

**If you need to contact our Team Ministers
for any reason, you can call:**

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**So much going on in this Lent time and beyond so
let’s get straight into all the news:**

Loads of Lent studies!

Once again, there are a number of Lent Studies running this year with many churches concentrating on the subject of prayer. People are welcome to mix and match with different times and venues as convenient:

Daytime

Mondays - Central URC: five sessions at 11am, from 6th March to 3rd April, in the Norfolk Room.

Wednesdays - At Dore and Totley URC: five sessions at 12.30 pm, from 8th March to 5th April.

Thursdays - At 52 Kenwood Park Road: five sessions at 1.30pm, from 9th March to 6th April.

Evenings

Tuesdays - At Gleadless URC: five sessions at 7.30 pm, from 7th March to 4th April.

Also in **Oughtibridge:** five sessions at 7.15 pm, on 7th March (24 Cockshutts Lane), 14th March (Anderton House), 28th March (20 Hawksley Rise), 4th April (Anderton House), 11th April (20 Hawksley Rise) - these will follow the York Course; details of directions to venues are available from Sara: cello67@hotmail.com

Wednesdays - At 52 Kenwood Park Road: five sessions at 7.30pm, from 8th March to 5th April (nb: venue may change after first meeting).

Peter's flowery message...

Our Interim Moderator writes from his "retirement":
"Thank you all so much for the gift I received following Jamie's Induction Service. It has been a long journey, but made with brothers and sisters who have been encouraging and supportive.

Now is the time to continue the journey together with thanks for those God has sent to lead His churches, and in anticipation of the great things we will see God do in our midst. For me I need to plan how to use the garden vouchers so that God will be seen in the beauty as Eileen and I watch His miracle of growth. Thanks again for all your support, Your Servant in Christ, Peter Heckels"

Time to think...

The **6th Annual Elders' Conference** is on Saturday, 22nd April at St Andrew's URC, Roundhay, Leeds, LS8 1DS.

Linda Rayner, the URC Fresh Expressions Co-ordinator, and our very own Jamie Kissack invite Yorkshire URC Elders to set aside some space to listen for God's voice and join God's mission. How can we be church for people who don't want to know about church?

There will be lots of discussion, fresh ideas, time to learn, time to pray, workshops, bookshop and real-life examples of how churches have faced these issues successfully.

To book a place your church Secretary will have a booking form or contact Val Morrison at (valmorrison7@btinternet.com)

The **Yorkshire Assembly** is on Wednesday, 10th May at The Spa Complex, Scarborough. The speakers are our own Kevin Watson and musician Simeon Wood. All are welcome.

A coach (£12.50) is being organised by Herringthorpe URC and anyone in Sheffield who is interested would be very welcome. Please contact Rev Matt Stone (matt.stone@cantab.net or 01709 373355). This offer is also open to anyone who just wants a day trip to Scarborough too!

Luther King House is hosting Northern College's popular **Lay Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Conference** from the 20th to 22nd April. The theme will be *Exploring Wisdom*, using Scripture and in a variety of creative and practical ways.

Attendance can be flexible. For full details of the programme, costs, registration or if you have any further questions, please log on to <http://lutherkinghouse.org.uk/2017/02/10/lay-preachers-conference/>

Thanks and Praise...

The Team **Prayer and Praise** meeting is still out on the road! Our next gathering will be on Sunday, March 19th at 7.00pm at Dore and Totley URC. This is an informal time to come together in thanksgiving to God for all He has done and to hold our work before Him in prayer.

Some other events...

Escape to sunny Italy...

Meersbrook Park Operatic Society present Gilbert and Sullivan's **The Gondoliers** from the 28th February to 4th of March. The performance is at Dronfield Civic Centre and tickets can be obtained by calling 0114 255 7634.

Band of hope...

Dore and Totley URC are hosting a concert by the **Dronfield Genquip Band** on Sunday 19th March at 3 pm. Profits will be shared between the band and the Sheffield Carers Centre. Tickets (£6) are available from Elaine Ferguson. elaineferg32@yahoo.co.uk

Mark this!

Reverend Ian Burkinshaw gives a stunning and dramatic retelling of the **Gospel of Mark** at Herringthorpe URC (S60 4JN) on Friday, March 24th at 7.30pm. Entry is free.

Culture cultures...

Sheffield Methodist Circuit are hosting a session led by Rev Osoba Otaigbe, based on his innovative publication **Building Cultural Intelligence in Church and Ministry**

This is particularly suitable for any church that wants to connect with other cultures in your community, that ministers in a very diverse congregation or is reaching out to teenagers, young adults and seniors.

It is on Saturday 18th March from 9.30am (refreshments) for 10.00am until 4.30pm at Victoria Methodist Church, Stafford Road, Sheffield, S2 2SF (nb: NOT Victoria Hall, Central). Booking details etc are at https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cultural-intelligence-follow-up-workshop-tickets-32083041240?utm_term=eventurl_text

Job Opportunity...

The Terminus café in Lowedges is looking to appoint an Assistant to the Health Manager to support delivery of the Community Wellbeing Programme across Lowedges, Batemoor and Jordanthorpe. This is 18 hours per week at £18,000 p.a. (pro-rata, £8,640 actual) with a fixed term appointment until 31st March, 2018. For further information, or to request an application pack, contact Greg Unwin on 0114 237 8540 or email managertti@btconnect.com. The closing date for applications is 16th March.