

## THE BAPTIST UNION RETREAT GROUP – 2016 REPORT

The Baptist Union Retreat Group (BURG) provides a focus within the denomination for those seeking stillness, reflection, and space for silent prayer in their journey with God and their involvement with the world. BURG organises a programme of led and individually guided retreats, supports local training events and Quiet Days, publishes a Journal 3 times a year and has its own website. As a member of the Retreat Association, BURG links in with their resources.

During 2016 BURG held a Retreat at The Briery, Ilkley (11-13<sup>th</sup> March) entitled 'A Way in the Desert: Journeying with Christ through Lent' led by Graham Sparkes and Pauline West with 20 people attending. Use was made of paintings and dramatic reading to enhance the subject.

The AGM, with 18 people attending, was held on 11th June at Amersham Free Church. The speaker was Geoff Colmer who shared his Journey into Ignatian Spirituality. In the afternoon there were buzz groups which will give the committee ideas to feed into future retreats and events. The following officers were re-elected: Rev. Ian Green - chair, Mr. Bill Carpenter - treasurer and Mrs. Christine Hutt - secretary, each to serve for one year. Heather Andrews was re-elected to the committee to serve for 2 years. With David Pountain having stepped down as Journal Editor, Ian Green has since taken over this task and given the Journal a new look. The Rev Dr Tim Mountain was co-opted on to the committee which continues to meet 3 times a year and includes a retreat day (residential) at one of the meetings. Membership of BURG at the time of the AGM stood at 106 which included 2 colleges.

A pilgrimage to Iona from 17-23<sup>rd</sup> September was led by Barbara and Bill Carpenter with half of the group of 16 being from BURG with other Baptists and some Anglicans making up the numbers.

From 25-27<sup>th</sup> November a retreat entitled 'Aspects of Advent' was held at Holland House with members of the committee leading the sessions.

The Journal, published three times a year, advertises forthcoming retreats and events. Journals in 2016 contained book reviews and articles about journeying, pilgrimage and striving to live the gospel, being aware of our own vulnerability and of the suffering world, as well as hearing how people had been blessed by going on retreat.

The BURG website [www.burg.org.uk](http://www.burg.org.uk) is kept up to date by Bill Carpenter, our treasurer, and provides links to other websites, information on events and retreats and resources to download, such as previous copies of the Journal and material for retreats.

The Retreat Association, of which BURG was a founder member, links with denominational retreat groups and individual affiliates and their annual booklet entitled 'Retreats' has excellent articles on spirituality as well as details and programmes of Retreat Houses mainly in the UK. Their website [www.retreats.org.uk](http://www.retreats.org.uk) has information on spiritual direction, training courses and retreats.

BURG has links with the Order for Baptist Ministry [www.orderforbaptistministry.co.uk](http://www.orderforbaptistministry.co.uk) and keeps up to date with developments.

Christine Hutt, Secretary  
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