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LINK

The newspaper of the Diocese of Newcastle

Dec/Jan 2020/21

Bishop Christine's Christmas message...



> Bishop Christine, and right and above, the new wooden cross and plaque at Bishop's House

God is with us, and in this we may abound in hope

I cannot remember a time such as this, where my longing for things to be different has been so acute, and the sense of waiting in the midst of everything so challenging. Covid-19 has come very near to many of us, and the threat of it in our society has shaped our way of being together, and had a very significant impact on our families, friends, and communities far beyond the previous life experiences of many people.

Many of you will know that my PA, Lesley Towers, has been on sick leave since catching Covid in March. Thankfully, she is now well enough to be

able to make a phased return to work, but she is still living with the effects of the disease. As we think about Lesley's experience, we are reminded of our own vulnerabilities to this virus, and of those of the people we love, and I am sure, like me, you pray daily for a relief from the impact that the virus is having on our nation and on people across the world.

As we approach the beginning of Advent, and the final weeks of 2020, I have felt that this year needs marking in some way that bears witness to the struggles we are living with, and in the garden at Bishop's House I have had a

wooden cross erected, with a plaque at its base, which reads:

COVID-19, 2020
Our World Changed in Ways We Could Never Have Imagined

*We stand at the foot of the Cross of Christ
naming those who have died
mourning with those who grieve their loss
rejoicing with those who have survived
praying for those who have not yet recovered
trusting in the love of God
wondering when this pandemic will*

end

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope
Romans 15:13

As I read the words on the plaque, the themes of Advent are clearly apparent. The naming of the reality of the difficulties of the world, the longing and waiting for change, and the hope we can have in God.

It is very easy to lose hope in situa-

tions such as those we are living through today, not just the coronavirus, but also climate change, gross inequality of wealth and distribution of food, access to good housing, and the refugee crisis, to name but a few - a 'multitude of overwhelms' as Geoff Miller, our Dean, has called it. The Psalmist, faced with the troubles of his times, gives us words of prayer for ours, 'Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord, hear my voice'. The journey towards Christmas reminds us that God is with us, and in this we may abound in hope.

Warm tributes have been paid to Canon Carol Wolstenholme OBE following her death on 5 November. Read her full obituary on page 5 >>



Bishop's Diary

This is not a full list of the Bishop's engagements but includes the items we think might be of particular interest to you. Under the present circumstances there is a possibility of cancellations or meetings changing to virtual meetings.

December

1st	10am	Diocesan Safeguarding Group
2nd	9.30am	Bishop's Staff Meeting
7th – 11th		House of Lords Duty Week
14th – 15th		House of Bishops
16th	10.30am	CC Mission, Pastoral & Church Property Committee
16th	4pm	North Church Leaders Meeting
17th	11am	Area Deans and Bishop's Staff
	1.30pm	Shortlisting for Vicar
		St Peter's Monkseaton
21st	8.30am	Bishops and Archdeacons
	10.30am	Diocesan Secretary
24th		Office Closed

January

4th	10am	Office re-opens
	4pm	Planning Meeting
		Northern Church Leaders
11th	9am	Interviews for Vicar
		St Peter's Monkseaton
13th	9.30am	Bishop's Staff
14th	10am	Interviews for Interim
		Minister Beamish and Till
17th	10am	Confirmations for Benwell Team, Newcastle West Deanery
18th	8.30am	People and Places
	10.30am	Diocesan Secretary
	2pm	Curates & IME2
21st	10am	Senior Staff Safeguarding Training
25th – 26th		College of Bishops
27th	10am	APPG Rural Services
28th	10am	Planning Meeting

Comings & Goings

APPOINTMENTS

The Revd Neil Heslop, Priest in Charge, Sugley (Holy Saviour), is also going to be Priest in Charge, Denton (Holy Spirit).

The Revd Lee James Cleminson, Assistant Curate, Balkwell and Tynemouth St John,

is now Priest in Charge, Balkwell and Tynemouth St John.

The Revd Deborah Maureen Baker, Assistant Curate (SSM), Ulgham Benefice, is now Distinctive Deacon (SSM) at Cresswell and Lynemouth

Gospel Readings

Unfortunately we are unable to publish December and January's Gospel Readings, but hopefully normal service will resume in the next edition of Link!

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Link is produced ten times a year by the Diocese of Newcastle, with joint issues for August/September and December/January. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Diocese or the editor. The editor is pleased to consider articles or letters of not more than 350 words for publication. Where possible, articles should be accompanied by a good-quality digital photograph of 250dpi or higher. Please contact the editor before submitting obituaries.

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2021 yearbook published

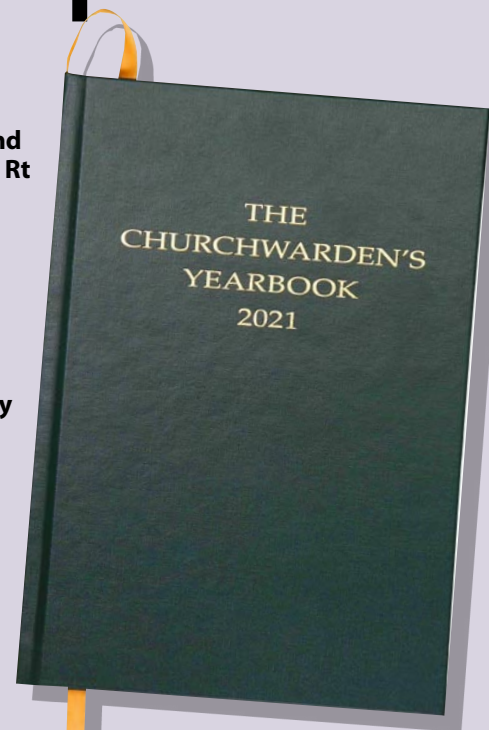
THE annual Churchwarden's Yearbook is now available to order.

Used by churchwardens and clergy in England and Wales, the annual diary includes a foreword by the Rt Revd Libby Lane, Bishop of Derby.

The yearbook covers Advent 2020 – Epiphany 2022, with extra pages for planning 2022.

It also features reference material to help churchwardens including a summary of the new Church Representation Rules 2020 and New Faculty Rules 2020; Eco-church and reducing the carbon footprint; safeguarding requirements; contact details for all Anglican dioceses in England, Wales and Europe; and Parochial Fees Tables for the Church of England and the Church of Wales.

Priced at £13.95 - including free delivery - when ordered direct from Churchwarden Publications, the yearbook is available to buy at churchwardenbooks.co.uk/churchwarden-yearbook-2021



A message from the High Sheriff of Northumberland

The High Sheriff of Northumberland, Tom Fairfax, was determined that his shrieval ministry year would be spent encouraging his fellow Northumbrians in their vocations and ministries. The Covid crisis has drawn on his natural creativity, Tom finding new ways to exercise his office, a lesson in positive flexibility for us all.

AS the gloomy winter evenings draw in it is tempting to forget the legacy that we have been left by those who have gone before. In November, we remembered the many who have sacrificed much so that we have the freedom to be defined by our decisions, our words and our actions. We all have a duty to make the most of this legacy.

We may not agree with every decision that our democratically elected government may take - but we are fortunate in that we have a system where these decisions can be challenged - not a privilege that is enjoyed in every part of the world. One of the hallmarks of democracy, is that there will be occasions where we disagree. We must expect to be defined by the way in which we deal with this.

Let's keep things in perspective; before complaining about having to limit the size of our

Christmas Parties, let us give a thought for the people who will spend their Christmas delivering essential services, or for the people in the past who spent their Christmas in the horror of the trenches, on the Arctic Convoys or in the leech ridden Jungles of the Far East. Let us think of those who have met bigger challenges than ours and who have prevailed.

We are not the first to face what sometimes appear to be insurmountable challenges, nor will we be the last. Let us not be defined by circumstances, but by how we deal with them.

In the years to come, when we look back on the way we have responded to these difficult times, let us hope that we can reflect with satisfaction on the part we played. If we step back rather than forward, we will have to live with that for the rest of our lives.

We face a winter of uncertainty and challenge - let's look the future in the eye and step forward to make the best of it. If we can do this, then we will to

take the legacy that we have been given and pass it on to our successors in the confidence that we have done our best.

None of us can do more than that!



> The High Sheriff of Northumberland, Tom Fairfax

THE new Archdeacon of Lindisfarne has described her 'joy' as she begins her ministry and new role in our diocese.

The Venerable Dr Catherine Sourbut Groves was collated by Bishop Christine at a special Zoom service online on Saturday 14 November.

Originally, the ceremony was due to take place in person at St Aidan's Church in Bamburgh, but plans had to be adapted following the announcement of a second national lockdown.

Catherine, 53, said: "There was a real sense of occasion despite it being on Zoom and I felt very emotional throughout the service."

"It was a real bonus that my family and friends, many of whom realistically wouldn't have been able to make the journey to be present at my collation, could watch the service on Zoom. My uncle who is in his 90s and lives in Exeter watched it in the same way that someone in Newcastle did."

Catherine thanked Bishop Christine for her warm welcome and to Diocesan Secretary Shane Waddle who ensured the technicalities of the service went off without a hitch.

The new archdeacon takes over from the Venerable Peter Robinson, who earlier this year moved to become Dean of Derby.

Catherine, who was brought up in Yorkshire, has spent the last 30 years in the South West where she was ordained in 2007. Until recently, she was the vicar of St Barnabas and St Peter's in the Diocese of Bath and Wells and Prebendary of Wells Cathedral.

She has had a number of additional roles including being Chaplain to the Mayor of Bath, Diocesan Vocations Chaplain and Archdeaconry Advisor on Women's Ministry.

Catherine was also co-leader of a 'virtual deanery' - called Magnificat Parishes Group - which was made up of disadvantaged parishes in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. She was an instrumental figure in the group which was set up to respond to the challenges of overseeing ministry and mission in less affluent parishes.

Catherine, who has moved to Northumberland with her husband Mike, is excited to bring her experience, knowledge and pioneer ministry background to our diocese.

She said: "It feels good to be back in the north. We love the area and we love Northumberland - the people have been really fantastic."

Warm welcome for Catherine



> The collation was held over Zoom, below, Bishop Christine during the collation service



> The Venerable Dr Catherine Sourbut Groves



> Revd Canon Rachel Wood

Acting Archdeacon of Northumberland

REVD Canon Rachel Wood is going to be the Acting Archdeacon of Northumberland.

The appointment comes following the announcement that The Venerable Mark Wroe, Archdeacon of Northumberland, is to be the next Bishop of Berwick.

Rachel will begin this role early in the new year, when Mark is consecrated as

more time to reflect and pray and think about the bigger picture. The fact we are in a pandemic is making us all think in a more pioneering way. We have to plan at a strategic level and we need to rethink about how we can 'be church' in a world of Covid, and how we emerge in the aftermath - we have to be imaginative, creative and pioneering."

Catherine and Mike, who have two grown up children, enjoy spending time outdoors and are looking forward to exploring everything our beautiful diocese has to offer.

If you would like to get in touch with Catherine, please email her at Lindisfarne@newcastle.anglican.org or call 0191 2704166 ext 266/ 07436 220872.

■ Watch Catherine's Collation online at <https://bit.ly/36yUX1T>

Bishop of Berwick. She will also continue to be Incumbent at St Mary, Monkseaton.

Rachel will be known to many people through her ministry at St Mary's, and also through various Diocesan roles she has held, including Local Ministry Development Officer, and more recently as Assistant Archdeacon of Northumberland.

Festivals of Light Appeal

THE Festivals of Light event - which is supported by the diocese - is still going ahead this year with some major changes.

Lesley Hillary, Inter-Faith and Ethnic Relations Adviser, and a member of Newcastle Council of Faiths, writes: "We hope to be able to bring some light to 80 families and over 150 children who are either asylum seekers, refugees or destitute families."

"We intend to deliver to each family a gift of chocolates, a goodie bag containing arts and crafts, including cards from the major faiths depicting their festival of lights and a selection box for each child."

"We have a sponsor who is paying for take away food for each family, we are so very grateful for his generosity and The Bahr Academy have offered to make the food for the families."

"We have had enquiries from other charities to ask if we can help them, as more than ever families are finding themselves pushed further into poverty. Unfortunately, we are unable to meet the demand for help at this time."

"In past years many of you have been so generous, buying toys for the children, hats and gloves and donating items for the free raffle we always held. This year I am writing to ask you if you could possibly make a cash donation to help us with this initiative."

If you can offer a cash donation, please send a cheque made out to Newcastle Diocesan Board of Finance (and mark the cheque Festivals of Light), Church House, St. John's Terrace, North Shields NE26 6HS. Church House will administer any money donated for this initiative.

Bishop's consecration date



> The Venerable Mark Wroe

WE are extremely pleased to announce that a date has been confirmed for the consecration of the Venerable Mark Wroe as our new Bishop of Berwick.

Mark will be consecrated on Tuesday 5 January at 11am in York Minister.

Because of Covid restrictions, there is likely to be a limit on the number allowed to attend, however video will be streamed live on the internet.

We'll post further details closer to the time on our website and social media channels, as well as in the e-Bulletin.



► Hexham Abbey is to embark on major roof restoration

Hexham Abbey receives lifeline grant

HEXHAM Abbey has received a lifesaving financial boost from the government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund.

It is one of 445 heritage organisations across the country to benefit from this funding, in a bid to help them through the coronavirus pandemic.

The Abbey has received a grant of £356,861 to be spent on much needed repairs to the roofs of the Chancel East End, North Transept, and the Nave North Aisle, helping to secure the building for future generations.

The slate roof coverings are in poor deteriorating condition and over the past decade have required continual repairs to ensure the building remains wind and water tight.

The funding will now see:

- The Westmorland slate and Welsh slate coverings to be carefully taken off
- The removal of failed fixings and battens
- The repair and treatment of any decayed and infested exposed timber work
- The formation of a new treated counter and tiling batten structure with breather membranes
- The re-laying of the salvaged existing and new slates
- The renewal and repair of the failed lead items

The risk of not carrying out this work is that timbers will likely decay and rot, causing irrevocable damage to the mediaeval roof. The mediaeval roofs are one of the glories of Hexham Abbey and rated as being of the highest significance to the Abbey fabric.

This vital funding is from the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage and the Heritage Stimulus Fund -

funded by the Government and administered at arms-length by Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Both funds are part of the Government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund which is designed to secure the future of Britain's museums, galleries, theatres, independent cinemas, heritage sites and music venues with emergency grants and loans.

The Revd David Glover, Rector of Hexham, said: "Roofs are easily taken for granted but are, of course, vital for protecting the whole building. By repairing now, the most badly deteriorated sections of the Abbey roof, we are ensuring the Abbey will continue to thrive as place of worship, pilgrimage and heritage, and continue to be a place of deep blessing to Hexham and the wider region.

"We are absolutely delighted to receive a grant from Historic Eng-

land for just under £357,000. We are also extremely grateful to the Hexham Abbey Restoration Trust which is providing the remaining funds to complete this crucial first stage of the Abbey Roof refurbishment.

"The value of Hexham Abbey and its Priory Buildings is of international heritage standing. It is a building that warrants the very highest quality in conservation techniques and standards, and requires the very best in skilled workmanship. This project will provide heritage skill development and high-level training opportunities for the successful contractors as we work to preserve this wonderful building for future generations."

The Abbey will be closed to the public from 4 January to 31 March while this work is carried out, reopening in time for Easter. The café, shop and Priory buildings will remain open. Services will continue to take place in the Priory buildings.

Prayer for the Nation



► Newcastle Cathedral illuminated earlier this year to honour key workers
Picture: Ian Berry and Drone Works North East

CHURCHES across the diocese are participating in a national month of prayer as we navigate our way through our second lockdown.

Throughout November, Christians are being encouraged to pray daily for a specific area of national concern, wherever they are, culminating in a collective moment of prayer at 6pm each evening, with cathedrals and churches invited to ring a bell at this time.

Christians are also encouraged to follow a simple seven-day prayer cycle, praying for a specific area each day including the NHS and frontline workers, the bereaved, and those struggling with physical and mental ill-health, and for children and young people.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "Prayer is my first response when I feel out of my depth, when I need help, when I am worried, when I am concerned for those I love.

"It is a gift that God gives to all - whether you are a regular pray-er or not - bring your cares and the cares of the nation to God. For God loves and hears and holds. Prayer changes things."

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said: "Prayer changes things. It changes things by inviting God into the room. At this challenging

time when all of us are fearful and anxious, and when so many are suffering, it is the one thing we can all do.

"We can pray and invite God to change us, giving us the solace, strength and comfort we need for the difficult winter that is ahead of us. Let's pray together at this difficult time."

The prayer call has the support of senior church leaders and is supported by the Church of England's House of Bishops.

A selection of resources to suit Christians from across all denominations and traditions, and those exploring faith at this challenging time, are available on the Church of England website to guide prayer throughout lockdown.

The call to prayer comes as both Archbishops encourage churches to redouble their efforts to serve their local communities, caring for the elderly and most vulnerable.

Prayers and other resources are being shared on social media with the hashtag #PrayerForTheNation.

To find out more information about the invitation to pray visit: churchofengland.org/PrayerForTheNation

Although Newcastle Cathedral isn't able to ring its bells at present due to ongoing development works, it is joining in the #PrayerForOurNation via YouTube. The cathedral is creating weekly videos which features the sound of its bells ringing and a member of the ministry team leading a prayer. Keep an eye on the cathedral's social media pages highlighting the different focus for prayer each day and visit its YouTube playlist at www.bit.ly/2Uz6xoe to watch the #PrayerForOurNation videos.

Messy Church home invasion!

IN the midst of the Covid pandemic, churches are creatively finding ways to continue engaging with people across their parishes.

And the latest initiative by The Revd Benjamin Carter and his team from the Parishes by the Wall is certainly keeping the younger members of his community entertained.

The team has launched 'Messy Church at Home' in response to nationwide social distancing restrictions which have prevented usual Messy Church events taking place in the benefice.

Families are now taking part in Messy Church activities from the comfort of their home over the second weekend of each month, culminating in an online Zoom service.

Around 50 children from three schools and churches in the local area – as well as two little ones from Scotland – are getting involved in the fun event which follows a different theme each month.

Benjamin, who came across the idea via the Messy Church network, said: "It's been working really well so far. The key to it all is organisation. We meet 10 days before the service to plan the theme, and then at the beginning of the week before the Sunday Zoom we pack up bags – a bit like a conveyor belt – with the various activities and prayers, which are then delivered to schools. They are kept in quarantine for three days before they're handed out to the children, so it's all very Covid-secure."

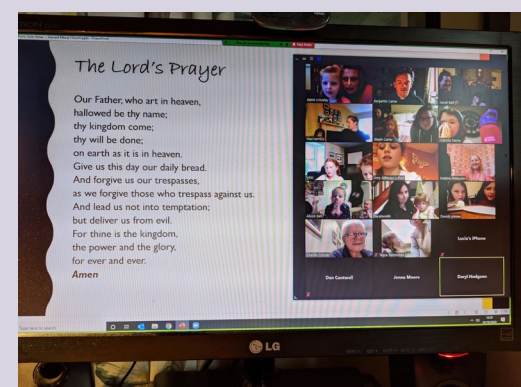
Themes covered so far are Harvest and Remembrance, with the children creating a range of fantastic artwork from autumnal wreathes to colourful scarecrows and poppies. The third Messy Church at Home event in December will focus on Advent.

Many of the families join the Sunday Zoom service, which Benjamin describes as 'extraordinarily chaotic (but in a good way)!'.

Benjamin added: "We have lots of excited six, seven and eight-year olds taking part. It's great as it allows the children to help lead us in prayers and do readings. It all comes together really well!"

From September 2019 up until lockdown, Parishes by the Wall were running Messy Church as an after-school activity. Benjamin added: "It will be interesting to see what happens once restrictions are lifted. Messy Church at Home might be one of the things that remains as it offers families a higher level of flexibility, and the engagement so far has been fantastic."

Benjamin would be happy to chat with anyone interested in the idea of running Messy Church at Home in their own area. Contact him at revbenjamin@parishesbythewall.com or call him on 01434 688196/ 07985 412542.



► The first Messy Church at Home Zoom service

By Colin Gough
with help from many other
friends and colleagues

A tribute to Canon Carol Wolstenholme OBE

Carol Wolstenholme had a sense of vocation: to serve God in every way she could as a lay person. Gifted with clear insight, intelligence and wit, she served the people of Denton, her family and very many friends. She was also highly valued by the people among whom she worked in sections of the Civil Service, for which she was awarded an O.B.E. on retirement in 2006. But here we commemorate with particular thankfulness, her contributions made over many ways and years to the people of the Diocese of Newcastle.

Carol was a life-long member of Holy Spirit, Denton, a Reader there for a quarter of a century and chronicler of its history. Though perhaps arriving at different perceptions of the roles of lay women in the church, she was shaped in the sixties by the spiritual leadership and teaching of Fr. Cook and they sparred happily together until the time of his death last year. In her teens she was elected President of their branch of the Anglican Young People's Association and this opened opportunities to experience church life and leadership across a wider section of the Church of England. Professionally, she rose to become Leadership Development Manager for the Pensions Service and her life-long mission has been to help the Church rediscover in our own time what the church of 'The Acts' knew, that everyone is gifted by God in discipleship and for ministry and that all must find their voice and let it sound, unhindered by issues of gender, education, prejudice or precedent.

Bishop Martin Wharton writes:

"Loyal, faithful, devout, always generous with her time, her abilities, and herself. Carol was utterly trustworthy and dependable. What she promised she always delivered. She was always fully supportive of the clergy, appropriately respectful, but never overly so: the very best kind of critical friend. People trusted Carol. She gave them confidence in themselves, in their faith, in the church, in God. We are all the better for having known her and having worked with her. She was gracious and kind."

I arrived in the Diocese in 2001 as Adviser for Continuing Ministerial Development. Carol and I met quickly as she had helped to set up a work consultancy scheme, providing experienced mentoring for clergy who recognised that fresh skills had to be developed in the ever increasingly complicated and demanding work of parish ministry. She was kind enough to take me on herself and three times a year she would listen to me talk about the increasing number of roles I was asked to fill. Encouragement, prioritizing, stalking the elephants: nothing passed her attention and forensic enquiry seasoned with affection and warmth led to a friendship we both valued. The whole diocese was becoming aware that with decreasing numbers of stipendiary clergy, more financial stringency and fewer church members,



➤ Canon Carol Wolstenholme OBE

fresh resources for ministry had to be uncovered if more folk weren't to experience breakdown and exhaustion. The title for a serious year-long training programme was supplied by Carol from her reading of American texts: 'Leading from the Future' was born and between 2005 and 2011 was the major opportunity in the diocese for those in leadership roles to review their existing patterns and resources for ministry and explore fresh ones for building resilience and energy for the next phase.

But what she worked for consistently in the Church was **inclusion**. She certainly valued ordaining women for ministry, but above all, she wanted lay Christians to discover and use their voice! Carol was appointed a Lay Canon of the Cathedral and a member of the Cathedral Council. As everywhere she took time to listen to people to find out what was going on and how they felt about things. She was always ready to provide help with HR and strategy issues. She was appointed Chair of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee, chairing effectively, keen to emphasise the 'mission' part of their role and

1 January 1943 - 5 November 2020

bringing her particularly 'lay' perceptiveness to proposals. She led a Deanery Development Task Group and became more convinced that the basic unit of mission had to move from parish to deanery. But to make that meaningful, more lay people needed to grow in confidence, to be comfortable handling issues and feeling able to question and contribute from their own experience. She and others worked regularly with Area Deans and Lay Chairs to make this possible, and in Bishop's Council and Bishop's Staff Team meetings she helped them explore ways of cutting through complex procedures that stifled rather than liberated lay voices.

Newcastle's 'Centre for Life' was galvanized in October 2014 with a 'Lay Voices' conference called for lay people and expressing themselves in song, in discussion and deliberation. Carol pursued this work at the national level and the 'Setting God's People Free' project sponsored by General Synod is a significant development in stimulating engagement, discipleship and action at local level.

For some years, Carol embodied our link with the Diocese of Winchester. Peter Rouch, until recently Archdeacon of Bournemouth has written:

"It feels as if the whole thing has become warmer, more relational, more open. We have joined each other in General Synod and in our own diocesan processes and decisions, not as some organised link activity, but because to be part of what each other is doing feels part of who we are. I have loved this change, and I have loved Carol whose character and energy have been at the heart of it. Always Carol has been just who she is. There has been no sense that she needs to present or conceal anything of herself and her diocese. Carol has I think drawn forth a matching response from those of us who have been living and ministering in Winchester. We have met and spent time together not as representatives of two different things/dioceses/whatever, but as people pretty much about the same life journey but at different ends of the country."

Carol was elected Lay Chair of the Diocesan Synod in 2015. This put her into the most significant role for a lay person in the local structure and gave an entry into every discussion, consultation and sphere where strategy was determined. To this she brought her whole lifetime's experience of Gospel and vocation and made her voice and those of other lay people heard. This role involved attending Deanery Synods and having regular

meetings with Lay Chairs from other dioceses who celebrate her for friendly warmth and straight talking.

Many have written on hearing the news of her death and perhaps David Wilson, Lay Chair of Leicester can speak on their behalf:

"Very sad news indeed. In my experience, Carol was a cup half full person who always saw potential for good even in the most challenging situations. There was a refreshing honesty and openness about her, along with a sharp wit and a generous heart. Her wisdom, kindness and good heartedness will be greatly missed by us all."

The strength of her convictions led Carol to stand for election to General Synod in 2008 as a diocesan representative and re-elected twice since. She was always prepared to speak on more occasions than called but when she was, her soft Geordie tones left their mark. In a debate about future financial resourcing of dioceses she had no qualms in speaking up for Newcastle with the reminder that 'Shy bairns get nowt!'. Her HR expertise was particularly recognised by Synod and she was elected by them onto two significant committees: the 'Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee', that makes recommendations about pay and pensions for stipendiary clergy and regulates conditions of service. The other, the 'Clergy Discipline Committee' monitors the exercise of discipline and highlights and encourages best practice. She frequently attended 'Faith in Research' conferences and as one Synod staff member commented, 'She was absolutely committed to basing our mission strategies on sound facts rather than anecdotes and she had a good "nose" for distinguishing sound, complex, research from presentational hype.'

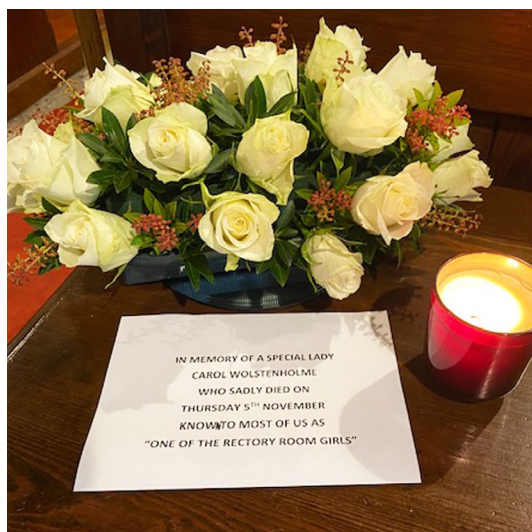
Bishop Christine writes:

"Carol has been such a significant part of our diocesan life that it is hard to imagine things without her. She brought humour, warmth, skill and wisdom to everything she did, and she challenged us to have a rich and biblical understanding of the life of the people of God, lay and ordained working together for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Carol saw the issues currently facing the Church and was passionate about the possibilities of God for our society, and the part the Church could play in this. She saw her own role not just as a diocesan officer but principally as a follower of Jesus, which was very apparent through the ways in which she looked at the issues of the Church and the world through the lenses of faith, and through her commitment to hospitality and to the welfare of others. We have lost a person of huge significance, and I know that I have lost a true friend."

Every learning session that Carol led ended with a period of reflection. She'd draw a marker line down the centre of a page of flipchart paper and write two sets of initials in the columns: WWW - 'What went well' and EBI - 'Even better if' It's not that she was never satisfied, only that there were always more needs to meet if tasks and the people undertaking them were to progress. No doubt on the day of judgment she will receive feedback and will listen and learn from what she hears! But for us now, we can simply be thankful that she has walked alongside us, befriending, enabling, supporting and encouraging us in our mutual building of God's Kingdom in our own time.

Carol's funeral was held at St George's Church in Jesmond on Friday 19 November. You can watch the full service on the Diocese of Newcastle's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ncldiocese

St Peter's Church Falstone remembers Canon Carol Wolstenholme OBE



➤ St Peter's Falstone pays tribute to Carol

By Jill L. Swaile, church warden of St Peter's Church

EVERYONE at St Peter's Falstone was so very sad to hear of the passing of Carol Wolstenholme recently. Carol was well known in Falstone as one of 'The Rectory Room Girls'. This name was coined by the villagers as Holy Spirit Church in Denton, leased the Rectory Room from St Peter's for almost 50 years and Carol and her friends Beryl and Meg (and others) were regular visitors. The Rectory Room Girls took part in all aspects of village life, they supported our church, Falstone Border Shepherds Show, the village shops, tearoom and pub.

Carol made everyone feel very welcome and there was always an open invitation to visit them in the Rectory Room when they were there. The folk in Falstone still talk about their BBQs and especially the church

service they organised in the garden of The Rectory when Revd Paul Adamson and his wife Rena were in residence. Whenever Carol and her friends were staying in Falstone they always attended St Peter's Sunday services, their wonderful singing will always be remembered. I know Carol was saddened when the Rectory Room was sold as it was like an end of an era for her, but she said her memories of Falstone were very dear and precious.

I had the absolute honour to know Carol not only as one of The Rectory Room Girls, but also in her role as Chair of the House Laity but then latterly when I cared for her in my role as her nurse in the final weeks of her life. Carol was instrumental in encouraging me to complete the Authorised Lay Ministry course and I will forever remember her with joy in my heart. May she rest in peace.

A village remembers...

THREE spectacular giant poppies in the heart of the village helped the people of Ponteland to remember the sacrifices of two World Wars and subsequent conflicts.

The traditional Remembrance commemorations could not be held due to Covid-19 restrictions and concern for people's health and safety. But Ponteland people still remembered with style and dignity.

A year-long community project by Ponteland Town Council led to the creation of the three giant poppies which attracted much praise. Individuals and organisations laid wreaths at the War Memorial informally rather than at the usual Remembrance Sunday service. Plus the Town Council asked children to put pictures of poppies in their windows and many people observed a two-minute silence on their doorsteps on Remembrance Sunday.

On the morning of November 11, the vicar of Ponteland, the Revd Capt Paul Allinson, went to the War Memorial for a private prayer. About 30 people gathered just before 11am, all standing socially-distanced, and a two-minute silence was observed, followed by representatives of several organisations laying wreaths.

The three giant poppies were made up of more than 2,000 poppies knitted or crocheted by people throughout the area.

Coun Karen Overbury, who helps to organise Remembrance events in Ponteland, explained: "The Town Council had planned drop-ins and workshops so people of all ages could get together to make poppies or learn how to knit or crochet.



> One of the giant poppies outside St. Mary the Virgin, Ponteland

"Obviously, we were forced to cancel all our community events, but we got the word out and the wonderful people of Ponteland came up trumps. The Town Council would like to thank everyone who made poppies. I hope by seeing the displays, residents will feel that their hard work was worthwhile. We have certainly had a tremendous amount of praise for them."

The Town Council had had to cancel the annual Remembrance parade and services, but encouraged individuals and groups to buy wreaths to support the work of the Royal British Legion and lay them at the War Memorial. The Town Council has also given a £200 donation to the British Legion.

Ponteland Mayor Alan Varley laid a

wreath at the War Memorial early on Remembrance Sunday.

He said: "All councillors were very disappointed to have to cancel the 2020 Remembrance Sunday parade and service due to Covid-19. However, councillors were determined that the fallen of the two World Wars and subsequent conflicts would not be forgotten."

Christingle



THE Children's Society and Church of England are hosting a special online Christingle service in December.

'Shining the light together' will take place on Sunday 13 December from 9-9.45am and will be a joyful celebration that brings people together to share the light of Jesus and spread a message of hope.

The service will include a few words from HRH The Duchess of Gloucester, The Archbishop of Canterbury, as well as The Children's Society Vice-Chair of Trustees the Bishop of Derby Libby Lane, the Bishop of Dover, soprano singer Joanna Forest and young people lighting the Christingles.

This service will be hosted on The Church of England's Facebook and YouTube channels. The link, downloadable Order of Service and how you can participate in the Christingle making will be shared on social media in the week leading up to the service.

Gerry hits the right note at St Gabriel's Heaton!

IN this edition of Link, we feature the story of 86-year-old choir singer Gerry Hogarth (originally published in The Chronicle).

Gerry Hogarth, from Heaton, has performed with St Gabriel's church choir since 1945, when he joined as an 11-year-old schoolboy.

On returning to Newcastle following evacuation during the Second World War, Gerry Hogarth joined his local choir.

His attendance at the age of 11 was inspired by a piano teacher while he stayed with a family in Belford, Northumberland as an evacuee.

And 75-years later the 86-year-old continues to perform at Heaton's St Gabriel's church, admitting that he has no plans of quitting the choir until he is told to stop singing.

Gerry, who has lived in Heaton all of his life, said: "I've always loved to sing and listen to church music and choir. Your voice can't go on forever. But until somebody tells me I should give up I will keep singing."

Gerry's passion for singing

with the choir spanned into a successful career in the music industry, performing as part of a male barbershop-style vocal group, The Dene Boys.

The group, who found success on BBC's 'What Makes a Star?' radio competition in the 1950s, was made up of young men from St Gabriel's choir.

And their name was inspired by their Sunday walks through Jesmond Dene between choir practice.

The Dene Boys later earned a recording contract with HMV, before their inability to play musical instruments brought an end to the quartet in 1959.

Gerry added: "We decided to retire gracefully as we were a bit late to the music scene and music was beginning to change.

"We were just four male voices, but by that time groups started to emerge that could play instruments.

"It was cheaper to get groups to perform as they could play everything themselves, whereas we needed to be accompanied by a band."

Since 1945 Gerry has remained loyal to St Gabriel's choir, attending weekly service and breaking only to perform with The Dene Boys, as well as pausing during the

peak of the coronavirus pandemic, when church services were unable to go ahead.

During this time he has witnessed great change in the choir, including the length of services and the number of people who attend.

Gerry said: "I have seen vast changes in the music of the church. Music has changed to suit changes to services and when I first joined it was an all-male choir.

"Rehearsals would take place twice a week and all day on Sunday was more or less taken over by different services.

"You would return home for dinner and have a walk around Jesmond Dene after 11am service. Then you would join Evensong at 6.30pm. But far fewer services take place today."

St Gabriel's church choir is looking to welcome new members. Anyone interested in joining or would like further information can contact chorus director, Timothy Burke via email at singingstgabriel@gmail.com.

And while they welcome members of all ages, Gerry hopes that his story will inspire younger members to join the choir.

He added: "It was a great shame when we lost the number of younger people joining the choir. It would be great to get more young people back into singing."



> Above, Gerry Hogarth, and right, St Gabriel's church choir, Good Friday Procession. Gerry pictured centre-left holding sheet music



Couple rearrange their wedding to beat lockdown

CHURIST Church in North Shields played host to a hastily rearranged wedding so a bride and groom could say 'I do' before lockdown.

Aly Harwood, 33, and Gareth Bateman, 34, moved their big day forward as the date they set a year ago fell in the middle of the second national coronavirus lockdown.

The pair, from Swarland, Northumberland, were originally due to wed on 20 November, and they had already scaled back plans considerably after social distancing restrictions forced them to reduce their guest list from 200 to 15.

But after hearing a second lockdown was set to be announced by Boris Johnson, Aly quickly realised the wedding wouldn't be allowed to go ahead at all.

The bride-to-be sprung into action and managed to rearrange her wedding in one day, bringing it forward to two days before lockdown.

Aly, an underwriter, said: "Gareth was about to go out with the dogs at 7.30am on Saturday and I checked the news and it said it looked like another lockdown was imminent," she said.

"I just thought, 'what can we do?' So I contacted everyone first thing to see if they could

make Tuesday."

Aly then contacted Revd Dorothy Robinson, Team Vicar for Christ Church, who confirmed she'd be able to marry the couple on 3 November.

Thanks to the efforts and goodwill of Aly and Gareth's wedding venues and suppliers, the ceremony went ahead with 15 in attendance, followed by a small reception at the newly-wed's local pub, the Cook and Barker.

Aly added: "It's been a total yo-yo of emotions. It was my dream wedding we had planned. But we just wanted to be married. It wasn't about the party for us."

Dorothy said: "Gareth and Aly just wanted to be married. Their wedding was booked for 20 November 2020, banns had been read and service planned - then lockdown is announced from 5 November! Aly asked if it would be possible to bring the ceremony forward to 3 November, so it was all systems go - florist, photographer and a small reception fell into place.

"It was a privilege to officiate at Gareth and Aly's wedding, it was a real spiritual experience. The bride and groom radiated with happiness - it was all about the marriage not the wedding day. The couple will be well supported by family and friends in their future together."



> Aly and Gareth Bateman married two days before lockdown



> The married couple sign the register in Christ Church



View from the Lantern

With The Very Revd Geoff Miller, Dean of Newcastle

I WANT to let you into a secret that we have been guarding at the Cathedral: The Grinch (nor Coronavirus) cannot steal Christmas! As the only Cathedral in England dedicated to St Nicholas it's a truth we have known for generations. Not simply because modern Christmas celebrations have subsumed Nicholas into their heart but also because Nicholas himself was always at pains to celebrate the joy, generosity and love that the birth of Christ constantly bestows upon his world and indeed even us. So, ignore the false news and remember Christmas is a time, virus or no virus, to enjoy the celebration of Good news in Christ.

In the Cathedral we have been thinking hard about how to do that while remaining responsible and as safe as possible. In more normal years (do you remember them?) like churches all over we would be hosting all kinds of groups as they joined us for carol services, with steaming coffee and mince pies by the thousands. In truth we had expected this year to be different as the main body (nave) of the Cathedral closed for refurbishment. Little did we know! But we refuse to allow killjoys their way. Our wonderful choir will help us stream (on YouTube) a traditional Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. Like many churches we will have our midnight mass and Christmas morning services. Even amid the (thankfully) continuing restoration works we will put out our wonderful olive wood crib made for us by friends in Bethlehem and decorate a Christmas tree. This year we will also have a series of short 20-minute carol services, in what may be a sort of 'carousel of carols' on the hour every hour for a festive afternoon. Most of all we will refuse to allow the Grinch (or a virus) to stop us pausing and celebrating the most wonderful gift we know. The gift of a saviour whose name is Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Then we will pray the year out and step into 2021 confident in God's presence right alongside us all the way. We know many of you will be about similar things, with similar motives and similar convictions. Our solidarity counts especially at times like these.

So, to January 2021, when the contractors will have been at the Cathedral for one very long and very eventful year. Slowly, but very majestically, the Cathedral is emerging from the rubble. It's colonnades almost float on the new floor and they seem to have grown bigger, wider, even more. The building is already lighter, fresher, clean-cut and open and we are only half way there. Outside, the grounds take shape and soon the new prayer walk will be installed all around. The interpretation is taking shape and telling our story in sound and picture as well as written text. It will be magnificent and I can't wait to welcome you into the finished, polished, restored 'old lady' that she will be.

But if you can't wait that long or would like to have a 'nifty shifty' of the progress sooner, then we aim to open the great West doors for (socially distanced) visits on quite a few days each week in the coming weeks - details on our website newcastlecathedral.org.uk for more information. If you are in town come and see, pray, worship. And please pray for us as we do for you.

Christmas at Newcastle Cathedral

Saturday, 19 December: Mini Carol Services with our renowned Cathedral Choir (see our website for more details and to pre-book).

Thursday, 24 December - Christmas Eve: 6pm Nine Lessons and Carols (pre-recorded and scheduled for transmission on YouTube) and 11.30pm Midnight Mass (pre-booking required to attend).

Friday, 25 December - Christmas Day: 9.30am Christmas Eucharist (pre-booking required to attend) and 11am Christmas Eucharist (pre-booking required to attend).

Christmas activities - join us online!

Saturday 12 December 10-10.30am Online Christmas Craft session for under 7s

Join Newcastle Cathedral Learning Team for a fun filled 30 minutes of crafts, games and stories. This event is free and suitable for children under seven. Children must be supported by an adult during this session, which will be on Zoom. Materials will be provided. This event is free.

Book: bit.ly/2UBm4E3

Saturday 12 December 10.45-11.15am Online Christmas Craft session for 8-12 years

Join Newcastle Cathedral's Learning Team for 30 mins of fun activities, including a Christmas craft. This event is free and will be online via Zoom. Adults must be available during this session. Materials will be provided.

Book: bit.ly/2KkAWEP

Thursday 17 December 10.00-11.00am Online Chat and Craft

Come and join the Cathedral learning team virtually in this fun activity for adults. In this

News from Newcastle Cathedral



session there will be an opportunity to learn new skills whilst connecting with your community over a cuppa. Materials will be provided. This is a free event, but you must have a Zoom account to participate. Book: bit.ly/3lHWfhr

Lantern Tower tours

A rare chance to climb the 162 steps of Newcastle Cathedral's Lantern Tower with breath-taking views of the city.

Each aspect of the tower tour reveals a unique story of the heritage and people of Newcastle upon Tyne.

You must be physically fit to take part in this tour. £20 per group (Max six people from the same household or support bubble per tour)

Tuesday 29 December 2020: Tours at 10am, 11am, 12noon, 1pm & 2.30pm

Book: bit.ly/3pGocZt

Wednesday 30th December 2020: Tours at 10am, 11am, 12noon, 1.30pm & 2.30pm

Book: bit.ly/3fe9WCb

These events are part of Common Ground in Sacred Space, funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Find out more at newcastlecathedral.org.uk

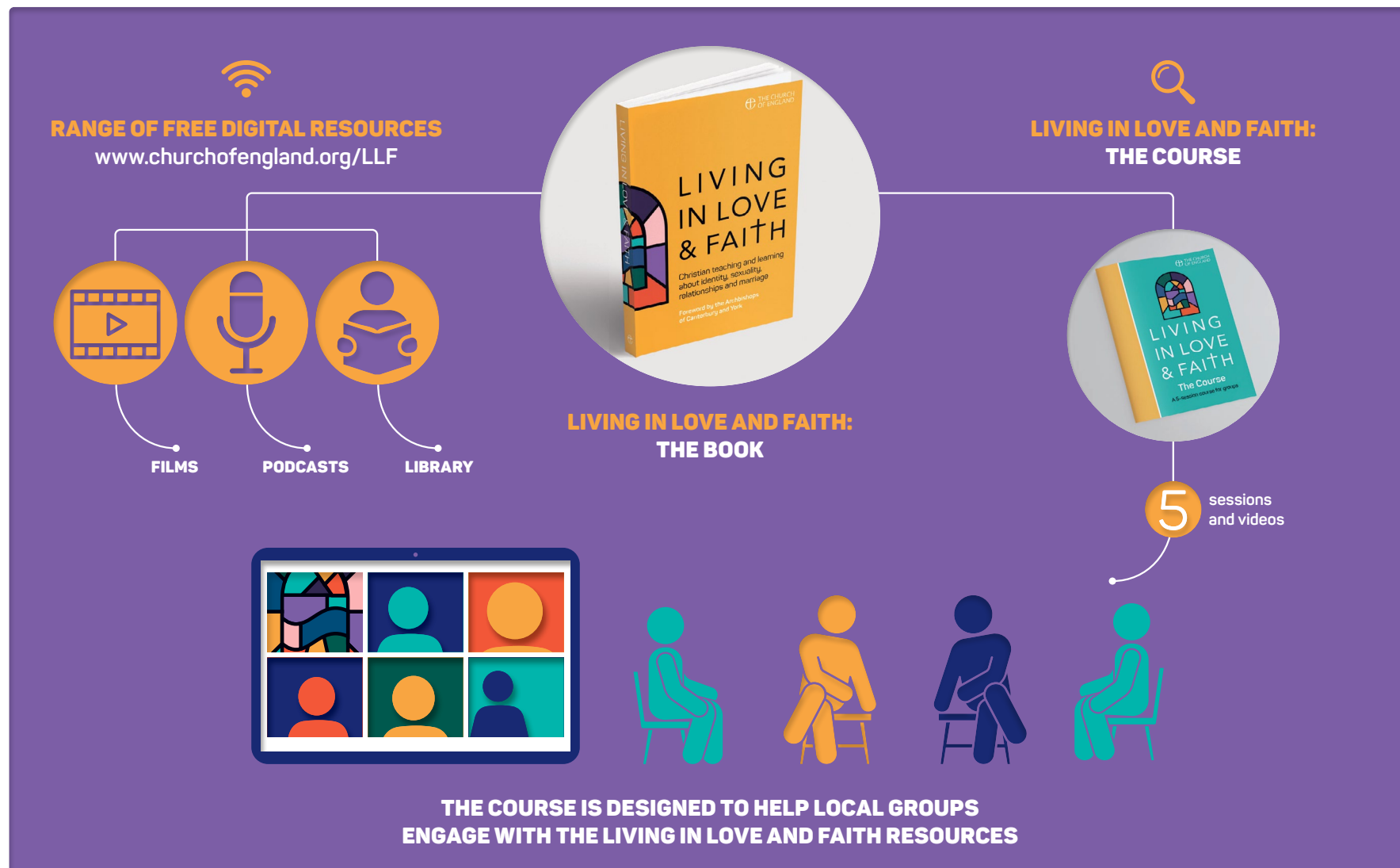
Teacher Recruitment

We have an exciting programme of activity lined up but we need your help to shape it and trial activities.

We are looking for primary and secondary teachers to form focus groups to help shape our exciting new learning programme exploring history, art and design, science, English, philosophy and religious studies. We are particularly keen to hear from RS teachers. Sessions will be online. Please contact alina.trewhitt@newcastlecathedral.org.uk

STOP PRESS! Look out for our exciting School's Time capsule project in January 2021!





Order the **Living in Love and Faith** Book and Course from Church House Publishing www.chpublishing.co.uk
The Book (480pp, full-colour) £19.99 | The Course (64pp, full-colour) £4.99, or 6 copies for £24.99



LIVING
IN LOVE
& FAITH



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Living in Love and Faith

resources published



LIVING
IN LOVE
& FAITH

THE Church of England has published a landmark set of resources drawing together the Bible, theology, science and history with powerful real-life stories as it embarks on a new process of discernment and decision-making on questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

The product of three years' work by more than 40 people, led by the Bishop of Coventry, Living in Love and Faith includes a 480-page book, a series of films and podcasts, a course and an online library of other publications, in what is thought to be the most extensive work in this area by any faith group in the world.

It comes as the House of Bishops issues an appeal to the whole Church of England to participate in learning together, using the resources for open, honest and gracious discussion, listening and learning.

A group of bishops, chaired by the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, will lead the process of discernment and decision-making about a way forward for the church in relation to human identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

It is anticipated that the period of church-wide learning and engagement would take place during 2021. The House of Bishops would then bring the discernment and decision-making to a timely conclusion in 2022 which would then be put before Synod.

In a foreword to the Living in Love and Faith resources, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, acknowledge and apologise for the "huge damage and hurt" that has been caused particularly to LGBTI+ people within the Church.

But addressing the future, they add: "Our prayer for the Church through this work is that collectively we demonstrate the same love to one another that we have experienced from God."

The book opens with an account of how Jesus invited people to sit down together as he fed the 5,000. It notes how Jesus often sat down with people with radically different lives and views.

In their invitation to the church, the bishops say: "Our prayer is that as all of us,

the people of God, take time to listen and learn together, our love for one another will be deepened and our faith in Jesus Christ strengthened so that His joy will be made complete in us."

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who will lead the 'Next Steps Group,' said: "The challenges of the pandemic have underlined how we need each other more than ever.

"At the same time, we can see how deeply divided the Church is over these questions, and we must seek God's will by learning together, listening to each other and to God.

"We will encourage and support churches to do this in ways appropriate to their local contexts over the coming year, inviting people to reflect on their learning, both as groups and individually.

"This must be a meaningful process with a clear way forward.

"However, it will not succeed without love, grace, kindness and compassion."

Festival of Angels

A 'VIRTUAL' Festival of Angels has been launched this year by Allen Valley Churches.

Following on from the very successful event in September 2019, this year's Festival of Angels

will follow a similar format to the parish's Scarecrow Festival at the beginning of lockdown.

The churches are calling on creatives in the area to make angels of any size, any medium

and any colour.

To enter your angel into the festival, simply take a photo of your creation and upload it to www.allendalechurch.co.uk/angels between 22 November

and 5 December.

Shirley Brown, Churchwarden of St Cuthbert's Church, Allendale, said: "Get your creative thinking caps on all of you crafters, knitters, needleworkers,

carpenters, metalworkers, potters, artists, bakers, flower arrangers. Let's flood the Allen Valleys and beyond with a heavenly host of angels winging their way and spreading joy, peace and love!"

Spotlight on contactless



➤ Goodplate in action at St Mary the Virgin, Slaley

THIS time last year, contactless giving in churches was still very new, even though the decline of cash was widely recognised. Knowing our churches needed to do something to offer a more flexible way of donating, we decided to use a grant from Allchurches Trust to invest in a selection of contactless equipment for parishes to 'try before they buy'.

Fast forward three months and we're in the midst of a national lockdown. No-one could have predicted such circumstances and the trials inevitably stalled.

As life slowly returns to a 'new normal,' the need for contactless giving has never been greater, for reasons we couldn't possibly have imagined before. Thankfully, almost a year on, we are finally beginning to see some real success with this across the diocese.

At St Cuthbert's Bellingham, a device known as the 'Goodbox Core' has been in use and has raised nearly £200 so far.

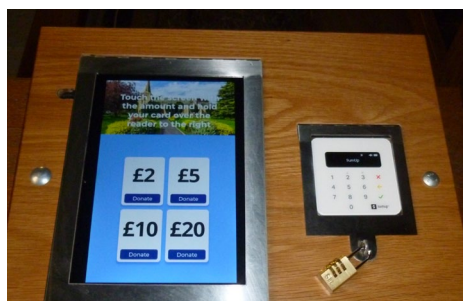
Churchwarden Cath Brennan said: "We've found [the equipment] to be an excellent additional way for people to give to the church. Visitors have been using it and, despite lockdown, we have been receiving donations when the church is open. In fact, with Covid restrictions, people are becoming more used to contactless payment systems and I think will want to go on using this donation method in future."

Vicar at St Andrew's Newcastle, Revd Mike Hills, agrees: "After positioning the Core just inside the entrance it has been easily noticed by tourists, visitors and parishioners alike. It is also easy to use because it merely requires a quick touch of a card on the screen.

"Owing to the pandemic, we have found people are becoming more used to a 'card method' for transactions in other areas of life, so the church is simply offering a familiar and safe way to engage in these challenging times."

Having now generated over £600, the PCC at St Andrew's have recently decided to use some of their proceeds to buy kit for another parish. St Mary Magdalene, Whalton, had already recognised the benefits of contactless equipment but unfortunately weren't in a position to invest at this point. Their PCC Secretary Wendy Sheldon said: "We are absolutely delighted by the generosity of St Andrew's and hope that we too can benefit a parish in the same way at some point in the future."

Another piece of equipment known as the Goodplate is being trialled at St Mary the Virgin, Slaley. Vicar Helen Savage said: "We have found the Goodplate invaluable over the last few weeks and will certainly look to acquire one for the long term. For the last six weeks we've used it every Sunday and people are delighted to do this rather than put cash on the plate. We've managed to raise over £200 since the end of September."



➤ Bespoke SumUp and tablet frame at St Lawrence, Warkworth

By Joanne Christie, Generous Giving Adviser @JoanneCTweets



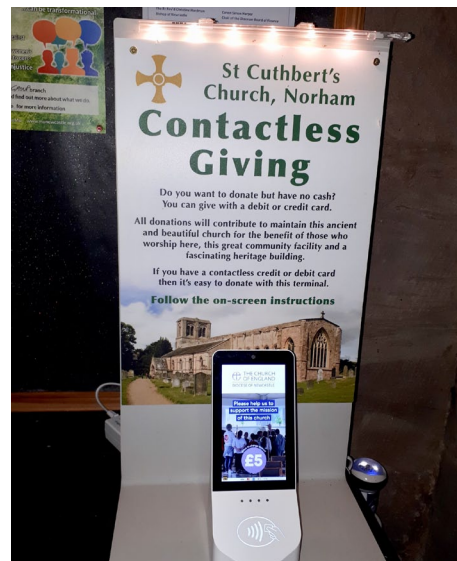
All Saints Gosforth, who also trialled the Goodplate, were one of the first parishes to invest in their own equipment having quickly recognised its potential. This has stood them in good stead post lockdown as Churchwarden Rosamund Place comments: "We were recently able to use the equipment at a mid-week classical music concert, where it proved most useful as people had already become adept at making cashless payments."

Elsewhere, many parishes have opted to try the SumUp card reader and tablet combination.

Revd Helen O'Sullivan recently set this up at St Lawrence, Warkworth. She said: "We registered with SumUp and GiveALittle as recommended by Parish Buying. We wanted to leave the equipment in church at all times unattended, so one of our Churchwardens designed two neat lockable frames for the tablet and card reader. The system has proven very popular and has been used for visitor donations and payments for books from our bookstall. We have received 61 donations on the card reader to date."

St John's, Whorlton, one of the earliest adopters of the same equipment, found it so well used post-lockdown that they quickly wanted to keep it on a permanent basis. They generously offered to fund the same set up for neighbouring parish The Benwell & Scotswood Team in return.

Assistant Curate, Revd Christopher Minchin, said: "We must say a huge thank you to Treasurer Janice Stait and the rest of the congregation of St John's Whorlton, who having received



➤ Customised Goodbox Core display at St Cuthbert's, Norham

some equipment themselves, decided to 'pay it forward' and purchase ours. In a church that has very little income or reserves, spending the extra to put in infrastructure starts to seem like a bit of a luxury when you've managed before."

Christopher also makes a good point about the positioning of contactless equipment, adding: "At first the card reader was easily ignored as we just put it by the nearest plug. We have now moved it to a more obvious place that everyone passes, and in services we make a point to remind people to use it. We also intend to use it to take payments when we restart our 'pay-what-you-feel' lunch club. As people carry cash with them less and less often, it does not mean they want to give any less, we just need to make it easy for them to give money in the way they are used to."

As well as positioning, many parishes comment on the importance of good signage in the success of contactless donations.

William Jackson, Churchwarden at St Cuthbert's, Norham, used his ingenuity to produce an illuminated feature display banner to sit alongside their Goodbox Core. He explained: "I made it myself with a sheet of Perspex which I bent using a heat gun. An LED light was acquired from Ikea and the image was printed by our local sign maker."

Like anything new, contactless giving will more than likely come with an initial period of trial and error. However, change is inevitable and we must embrace new things if we are to future proof our churches. As Liz Walford, Treasurer of St John the Baptist, Alnmouth said: "The physical presence alone of our Goodbox Core meets our additional aim of showing the church is moving with the times."

This year has shown beyond a shadow of doubt that we can keep up. The speed at which our parishes have adapted and the willingness that has been shown to learn and share new skills is a real testament to the determination and commitment of our communities. Taking positive action now is vital to our financial security next year and beyond. As we look forward to the return of weddings, baptisms and other occasional services in our church buildings, we can take this opportunity now to position ourselves well for the future.

If you would like to know more about any of the information in this article or arrange a trial of contactless equipment, please get in touch with the Generous Giving Team. We can also provide help and support if you're looking to set up your own equipment.

■ Contact Joanne at j.christie@newcastle.anglican.org or call her on 0191 270 4155/07503 338 013

Tackling food poverty



➤ Packing up the bags during half-term

In our September edition of Link, Revd Allison Harding revealed her discovery of the hidden poverty in the parish of Newburn and the number of people in need of food. Since the publication of the article, Allison has been overwhelmed by the response and writes a follow-up piece about how she, Jacqueline Atkinson, Children & Families Missioner, and others in the parish have been tackling the issue.

AFTER an article that was published in the Link we had an amazing response from an anonymous donor which gave us the confidence to move ahead with our response to the need that was uncovered during the summer, both in Newburn and Denton Parishes.

During October half-term a number of people from the church packed food into bags to be given out to families in need. Jacqueline Atkinson and I then delivered the bags to families in Newburn, Throckley and Denton. I want to say a huge thank you to the West End Foodbank, to Newcastle West Methodist circuit and to St Mary's Ponteland who donated food to us. We were overwhelmed with the kindness of people.

We made up over 40 food parcels and gave each family a pumpkin and a pumpkin prayer written by Jacqueline. The recipients of the food were delighted - on the doorsteps there were tears, laughter and lots of gratitude. Word got out about what we were doing and people from the community have volunteered to be involved as this develops. It's so humbling, I can't express how grateful I am that, because people have responded, we can continue to do this vital work. We now have a few families that we are delivering to each week and hope to be able to offer weekly food parcels to more families in the near future.



➤ Pumpkins and pumpkin prayers were given out with the food parcels

LIKE A METAPHOR



Tim Hardy (formerly of the Religious Resources Centre) writes at www.timbo-baggins.co.uk and spends the rest of his time raising his young daughter and riding a bike around Leamington Spa.

DEATHS, BIRTHS AND MARRIAGES

I RECENTLY bought a Memento Mori Rosary - each of the smaller beads a tiny skull, with slightly larger black beads, dividing these into sets of ten, and marking time to reflect on one of a set of readings on the theme of death from its introduction in Genesis up to the crucifixion of Jesus. If you use the traditional 'Hail Mary' for the short prayer, then each little skull bead will finish with '...pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.' Fifty little reminders that our time in this world will come to an end. But the crucifix at the end of this rosary, whilst it does feature the crucified Christ, is a double crucifix that also features the Christus Rex: Jesus risen, glorious and triumphant, reminding us that our end in this world is not our final end - the ultimate truth of our faith and a source of hope and comfort even as we live through ongoing daily reminders of our own struggle with mortality.

More recently still, I had a birthday and received greetings cards from friends and family alike, celebrating that I'd survived another circuit around the sun and that I was another year older - and, indeed, older than most of my friends. Birthdays are great but sometimes, every



'happy birthday' can be a reminder of both how far we've come and hopefully the time we have ahead of us. The beginning of the Hail Mary prayer is based on the greeting of Gabriel at the annunciation - an event in which she was terrified to begin with, asked questions next and then acted in faith, saying, 'so be it' and beginning her journey as the future-mother of Jesus. I wonder if, each time she hears us saying, 'The Lord is with you!' Mary thinks back to that first greeting and everything that has happened since - I'm sure if she does, she takes it with more grace than I do the ruder birthday cards.

The gospel of Matthew tells us that Joseph 'took Mary as his wife' after she was already pregnant and that they didn't consummate the marriage until after Jesus had been born - the 'married but not as fully-married as they were going to be' acting as a foreshadowing of the 'here but not yet fully here' found throughout the Gospels. Indeed, during Advent, we look forward not just to celebrating the birth of Jesus but also his 'return in glory' when, as the biblical imagery has it, the church shall be the bride, united completely at last with the risen, glorious and triumphant Christ - a Jesus who, nevertheless, is with us in our day-to-day confrontations with our own mortality.

Going for Green

By **Mark Nash-Williams**, Bishop's Advisor for the Environment

Advent Calendar for Creation

AS Christmas approaches I'm reminded that, in Jesus, the God of all creation came to dwell among us, sanctifying this good earth by his presence and demonstrating his love for it. Caring for the earth on which Jesus trod, and for all its creatures, is an integral part of our response to God's love - and by the time you read this, I hope our Diocesan Synod will have committed us to being Carbon Net Zero by 2030, and to becoming an Eco Diocese.

But God doesn't only call us to

care for the world: he invited us to delight in it too - and as we do so, we may feel a deeper sense of connection with God, and the creation of which we are a part. Do you ever go outside to enjoy the world at this time of year? Even in the cold and the darkness

(well wrapped up!) there is much to appreciate. So, as we wait for the birth of the Light of the World, why not try some of the activities in this Franciscan-inspired 'Advent Calendar'? (with thanks to the Revd Hilary Bond)

1 Collect some fallen leaves and use them to make a picture or a pattern.	2 On a windy day see if you can catch a falling leaf.	3 See how many flowers you can find.	4 Use a fallen leaf to make a leaf rubbing.	5 Go out in the rain and let your hair get wet. Turn your face towards the rain and see how it feels.	6 Find somewhere that you can sit still and watch for birds.
7 See how many different coloured leaves you can find.	8 Touch the bark of a tree and see how it feels. Try more than one and see if they feel different.	9 Learn the name of one new plant or tree.	10 Find somewhere outside you can be quiet and comfortable for five minutes and simply listen.	11 Look at how beautiful a raindrop is when it gets caught on a plant or a fence.	12 Find two different sorts of leaf. Have a good look at them then close your eyes and see if you can tell which one is which. If that is too easy try it with lots of leaves.
13 Go and look at how beautiful things can be when they are covered in frost.	14 Find somewhere outside where you can stay still for five minutes, close your eyes and see what you can smell.	15 Listen to the noise of trees moving in the wind.	16 Have a close look at a patch of grass and see what you notice.	17 See if you can find a plant with a smell (preferably a nice smell)	18 Hold a leaf up to the light and see the patterns in it.
19 Go for a walk and be aware of what is under your feet.	20 Go out in the dark and look at the stars and the moon.	21 Sit still for long enough to watch the sun set.	22 Get up early and watch the sun rise.	23 Go for a walk and write a poem about what you saw or heard or touched or smelled.	24 If you are in a place where you can - have a bonfire and toast marshmallows.

Greening our churches in the New Year

ARE you wondering how to start on the journey to Net Zero? Why not start the New Year by reading 'The practical path to net zero carbon for churches' - a really useful

resource from the Church of England's environment team (tinyurl.com/y367kc44)

The team is also putting on some excellent webinars on topics ranging from heating and lighting solutions, solar pv panels and electric car charging, to energy management and 'quick wins'. Some of these

are in December, so you don't need to wait until January! <https://tinyurl.com/y5m5qqy3>

For further inspiration, sign up to the Church of England's excellent quarterly environment newsletter <https://tinyurl.com/y2c53518>

Christianity and climate crisis book launch

THE Founding Guardian of The International Community of Aidan and Hilda has written a book about climate change and Christianity.

Faced with the impending climate crisis and significant and irreparable damage being done to the earth, and climate campaigners who believe Christianity is not earth-friendly, this book offers a Christian spirituality of creation.

Ray Simpson's latest offering, called 'Celtic

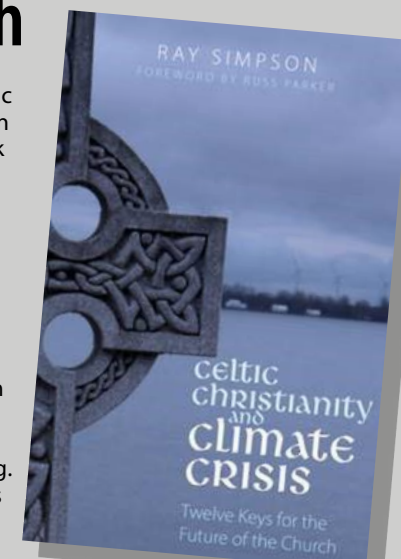
Christianity and Climate Crisis', explores some of the key concepts of the Celtic tradition - and some of the criticisms levelled against it.

He shows how the Celtic affirmation of creation and of equality and love among human beings hold the key not only for the future of the Church but of the whole planet.

Ray said: "Since my first book on Celtic spirituality was written 25 years ago, I have examined all serious

criticisms raised against Celtic Christianity. I boil these down to twelve, and liken this work to mining. Much dross is indeed discarded, but gold is also quarried. I highlight twelve golden keys not only for the future of the Church but for the whole planet."

The book (£12.99) is available to order direct from the publisher (Sacristy Press) or Amazon or from Ray's website www.raysimpson.org. It can also be downloaded as an e-book on Kindle, Kobo, iTunes and Google Play.



Alison brightens up our lives

IF you need a bit of sunshine in the gloom of lockdown, then you need to listen to Alison Rudd's new CD 'Morning Sunshine'.

Alison, who lives in Amble and is organist at Alnmouth and Lesbury churches, works as a peripatetic music teacher in Northumberland teaching piano and keyboard.

Alison said: "The CD evolved during the lockdown when I had lots of time at home to compose and improvise on piano, keyboard and flute inspired by the natural beauty of Northumberland.

"When the churches were closed the opportunity arose to record music for the Aln and Coastland parish website.

"My music explores the varying sounds and rhythms available on the keyboard and I was able to combine them using multi-track recording."

The CD consists of solos and improvisations for keyboard, piano and flute, as well as a Northumbria Suite and a Jazz Suite.

The Northumbria Suite consists of six movements: Howick Pastoral, Longhoughton March, Alnmouth Air, Lesbury Jig, Warkworth Sarabande and Amble Hornpipe. Each movement has its own character reflecting one aspect of the village or town.

One member of the Alnmouth congregation has described the CD as '38 minutes of joy and meditation'.

The price is £5 which includes a donation to Cancer Research UK.

■ **If you would like to buy a CD, contact Alison on 01665 713974 or alisonsmusic@outlook.com**



> Alison with her new CD

Two's Company - telephone befriending

ISOLATION is a word we have heard a lot in 2020, and we know that many people are feeling lonely and are not able to have regular contact with their families, neighbours, and churches.

As churches we have often been at the centre of offering spaces of welcome, hospitality and company for those in our communities.

'Two's Company' was launched in April and is a telephone befriending tool for churches based on a framework already established for the 'Linking Lives' home visiting projects.

It is designed to be a tool which churches can use to reach those people in their communities hardest hit by lockdown measures.

The model is quick, easy, and safe to set up and is free of charge (although donations are welcome). Training is carried out by Linking Lives UK for local coordinators by Zoom, who can then cascade that training to local volunteers.

Calls are made to Link Friends on a weekly basis for around 30 minutes and this is often a real lifeline to those most marginalised and unable to engage with friends or family.

Referrals are received from social workers, social prescribers (community connectors etc.) and from family members.

Linking Lives UK is still inviting churches to partner with them to provide this vital service to their communities.

Communities Together Durham and Newcastle and North East Churches Acting Together are partnering with them and are hosting an information webinar for churches who wish to find out more.

The Two's Company information webinar takes place on Thursday 21 January 2021 at 1pm. And you can register via <https://bit.ly/2lD8qxx>

■ For more information, contact Joanne Thorns on regionalofficer@necat.co.uk or visit: www.linkinglives.uk

PREPARING FOR COMFORT AND JOY

I AM writing this in the season of remembrance and as I watched the Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph I realised how adaptable we humans are.

The event was certainly notable for the lack of crowds but more than that, it was notable for the way in which honour and respect was still demonstrated despite the restrictions. Symbols of respect were still offered, prayers were still said, heads were still bowed in respect and the dead were honoured in the way our nation and communities choose so to do.

This was a most powerful reminder that, regardless of the situation, there are things over which we do have control and things that we can do; there are situations in which we have influence over what can happen; and there are situations where we have no control at all and the best that we can do is adapt or maybe endure.

The first time I saw this idea in print I thought: So what? That's obvious.

Of course, if it were obvious then we would

Wellbeing

by **Patty Everitt**,
Counselling
Advisor
(Interim)



all be acting on it, so perhaps it isn't that obvious after all.

Imagine, if you will, three concentric circles.

The inner circle, the bull's eye, contains everything over which we have control and power. It includes, unsettlingly and most importantly, how we choose to respond to other people and events. Our response includes our behaviours, our thoughts and our emotions. Yes! We do have control over how we choose to feel.

The area between the bull's eye and the second circle contains all the things over which we do not have direct control but where we do have influence and can contribute our views and opinions. This includes the way we choose to vote to influence who will represent our views and the discussions we have with others about what should or could happen. If we do not like the outcome then we could change our perspective on the situation and choose another response, or we may be content and do nothing more. We could also rant or take offence. We control our response, and this includes when a sibling winds us up (yet again!).

The area between the second and third circles contains all that we cannot control and cannot influence. Within that area lies the weather, the motion of the planets and, again unsettlingly, the way other people choose to behave and respond in a situation. We can choose how we respond to events even though we cannot control the events themselves. We can choose to do the best for ourselves and others under the circumstances or we can choose another course of action. Our responses are still under our control. Terry Waite's choice of response to his captors when he was held hostage is a profoundly humbling

reminder that we can choose our behaviours.

As Advent approaches now is a good time to remind ourselves of what is in the bull's eye, what is in our area of influence and what is beyond our control and influence and which we simply have to accommodate.

We can use this time of preparation to make choices about our spiritual, emotional, mental and physical response to the challenges and joys that will or might arise for us at Christmas.

We can use the time of Advent to take stock of what we can control or influence and what we cannot.

The one thing over which we always have control is how we choose to respond. When we recognise this, then we are most likely to be at peace with ourselves and the world. That could be a hopeful place to find ourselves in the season of Peace and Goodwill, of Comfort and Joy. Happy preparation.

If any of the above sparks something that you would like to explore, please contact Patty at counselling@newcastle.anglican.org and find out how the counselling service might be able to help.

Sharing skills for digital church



BEING Generous can cover many aspects of our calling as Christian disciples. As well as financial generosity we are also called to give our time, gifts and talents too.

If repeated social lockdowns have given us time for soul searching then are there some new practical ways in which we can be generous? Can we use our gifts and talents to nurture and grow our own church, or could we also take a wider view and consider helping other churches across the diocese to flourish?

In thinking through what this could look like it led to a conversation with a group called Together Newcastle and Gwyn McKenzie: "Together Newcastle is all about collaboration and we believe that every parish has assets they can use and share for the benefit of others. We don't think of assets as primarily financial but as human. There is an abundance of 'gifts' everywhere, our job is to help find them and support folks as they work out how best to use those gifts locally. If we can help share those gifts on a wider basis so much the better for everyone in the diocese."

As part of my role within the Generous Giving Team, we have been working with parishes to better understand what support they may need during the Covid pandemic. One common practical challenge that we have all faced in the last few months is the use of technology in church life. As a result of this we realised there was a need to bring together a group to discuss this, and set up a new Diocesan Digital Development Network which could facilitate the sharing of learning, to support one another and explore practical solutions which can help our churches grow and evolve.

Network member Matthew Hunter, from

By Andrew Tinkler, Generous Giving Team



St. John's Whorlton, told us: "As a relatively late adopter, rather than a digital native, I'm conscious of how inadequate technology can make you feel, but also know that being willing to experiment and figure things out is integral to developing proficiency."

At our recent meeting it was useful to hear what other churches were doing, but I felt I should stress that it's important not to overcomplicate matters. Plus, where finances are tight, we may not need to make a substantial financial investment in new audio-visual equipment either. I felt some simple solutions were closer to hand; trust the smartphone in your pocket, and the software on your laptop (and sync your devices!)."

So, sometimes it is about making better use of what we already have and understanding how to get the best of our current equipment then. This is where some conversations with one another can really help.

digital LABS |  **THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

Gwyn told us: "I can't claim to be a technical whizz and was struggling to work out how to lead online worship from my own church in Riding Mill as we headed into the second lockdown, but a conversation with another church gave me a simple solution which worked really well. Without that bit of sharing I'd still be struggling!"

As a network we have also spoken about the challenges associated with technology and our church buildings themselves; if you do not have Wi-Fi or 3G/4G that enables you to livestream a service, then perhaps recording and uploading after the service or event could be a preferred option?

Matthew added: "Why rush to install Wi-Fi in a church building during the pandemic when you can give yourself permission to literally do church at home, where you most likely already have broadband (and heating, for that matter)! Digital Church, or even just digital proficiency as a church, doesn't have to be daunting or expensive, and might even be fun!"

So, being generous with our skills and knowledge can help us grow as individual disciples but it can also nurture others and the wider diocese too.

Whilst a digital network may not have all the answers at least it gets us talking and working together to share skills and support one another in new ways for these new times. If you would like to learn more or get involved please get in touch with the **Generous Giving Team**. The Church of England also runs online training (Digital Labs) at www.churchofengland.org/resources/church-england-digital-labs which features a blog covering a range of topics such as filming services or events on your phone.

Free Covid Cash Recovery course

As we enter what will be a difficult winter, with many changes to government policy, and increasing levels of need in our communities, the Covid Cash Recovery course is more important than ever in equipping people to support those who are experiencing financial hardship at this time.



COVID CASH RECOVERY

TOGETHER NEWCASTLE

Together Newcastle is delivering the last few online Covid Cash Recovery Train the Trainer sessions 10am - 12.30pm on the following dates:

- Tuesday, 1 December
- Wednesday, 9 December
- Tuesday, 15 December

These online webinar sessions will be covering everything from general entitlements, rights, government and charitable support, to budgeting, help with bills, loans, debt, and money strategies for making it through these next few months. Together Newcastle can also offer this as a bespoke course for groups of six or more.

For more information email kerry.crellin@together-newcastle.org or visit www.together-newcastle.org/whats-new/covid-cash-course

Low carbon church webinars

 **THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

A WEBINAR about housekeeping and quick wins is being run by the Church of England.

This webinar tells you where to start on making your church more energy efficient and how to reduce carbon emissions.

Practical steps like setting boiler/heating controls, DIY draught proofing, timers, water saving, procurement of energy and energy bills. Simple steps that don't cost the earth.

Speaker: Matt Fulford from Inspired Efficiency. Matt is the sustainability advisor at Gloucester Diocese, and has carried out countless church energy audits as part of the national audit programme and the Oxford Diocese audit programme.

He led a project at his own church, to make St Michael and All Angels Withington a 'zero carbon' church.

- Tuesday 1 December, 4-5pm
- Thursday 17 December, 12-1pm

For more information and to find out how to register, visit <https://bit.ly/3KJzetzj> and scroll down to 'Webinars on low carbon solutions - heating, lighting, solar and more', then click on number three.

HAVE YOUR SAY

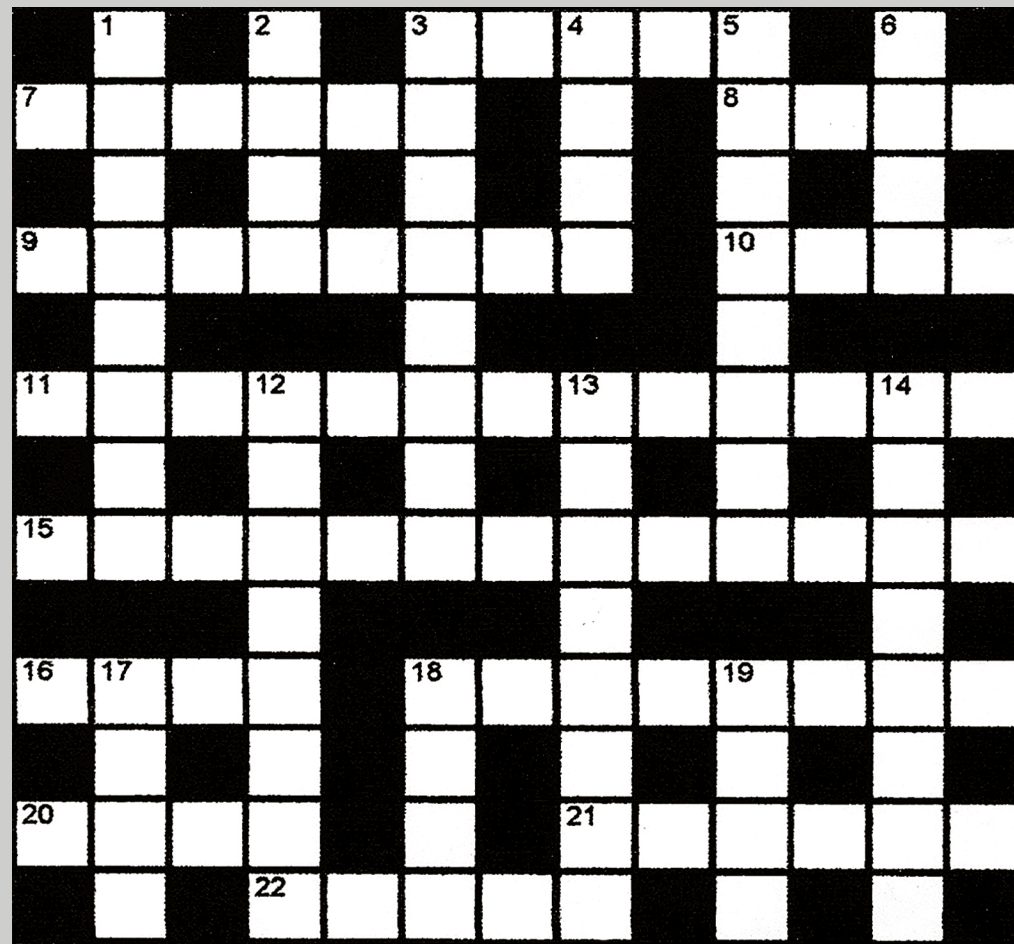
Anything catch your eye in this month's LINK? Something on your mind? Or in your prayers? Send an e-mail, message or letter to LINK and we'll publish the best of them:

Have your say. LINK, Church House, St John's Terrace, North Shields NE29 6HS. Email us: link@newcastle.anglican.org



Link Crossword 168 *Compiled by Mary Sutton*

This month we are including the crossword for anyone looking for something to keep them occupied during lockdown but just for fun (sorry, no prize this month). Please DO NOT submit crosswords to Church House.



ACROSS

3. Good book with protective cover found by the French (5)
7. Skin design needed for military entertainment (6)
8. Brother involved in film on king (4)
9. Accommodation for soldiers arriving among defenders (8)
10. Woman badly hurt (4)
11. Man taking time with mother's vehicle initially delivering seasonal item of post (9,4)
15. Comprehending mutual agreement (13)
16. Just light (4)
18. Quiet substitute wanting jam (8)
20. Stake found by a Greek character (4)
21. Ask for popular verse and most of article (6)
22. Wise men about to show conjuring tricks (5)

DOWN

1. Mother with deserter, hot, on long run (8)
2. Celebrity followed by wise men? (4)
3. Refuses to deal with lad with beds, say (8)
4. Singer, graduate, on ship (4)
5. Eastern doctor, rushed, being hugged (8)
6. Insect held by ageing naturalist (4)
12. One Conservative initially eating best frozen food (8)
13. Scholar, a rogue, with Eastern tailless rodents (8)
14. Repair taking about a month at Easter, originally (8)
17. Guys appearing after a prayer's final word (4)
18. Dog swallowing large stopper (4)
19. In French verse, youth initially showing jealousy (4)

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD 167

- ACROSS: 1. Rite 3. Chancel
8. Vice president 9. Rye
10. Elite 12. Diocese
14. Trowels 16. Resit
17. Tea 20. Distinguished
21. Address 22. Spud

- DOWN: 1. Reverent 2. Tact
3. Chewed 4. Aristocratic
5. Cleaners 6. Late
7. Apprehensive 11. Idolised
13. Extended 15. Stages
18. Idea 19. Ship

Major Tyneside theologian honoured again

By William Cooper Bailey

THE prestigious Praglia Abbey in Italy, who have just published the final volume of their Monastic Antiphonal – the standard Gregorian Chant book used in monasteries and Christian communities worldwide, have honoured the Venerable Bede – the theologian and hymn writer from Tyneside who died in 735, by including his hymn for Vespers on the Festival of the Beheading of St John the Baptist in the final volume of their chant book.

A new development in the Chant field is that modern chant books now include where the music and words came from – in this case a 13th century manuscript in Rouen Municipal Library in France – the Jumièges Sanctoral, folio A339, if you want to know.

Progressively, manuscripts are all being scanned, so that documents can be read remotely on line.

There is nothing old fashioned about the Praglia Benedictines: modern word processing for Gregorian Chant handles both



> Bede's hymn in the chant book

words and music together, so that the computer locates the syllables under the correct notes automatically, and obviously does two colour typesetting and large initial letters with an effectiveness early scribes could hardly dream of.

Although today Bede is often remembered mainly for his History of the English Speaking Peoples, he was actually a prolific writer and produced many Bible Commentaries and Sermons (used by some parishes for Lenten study), and school text books on mathematics, music, botany, astronomy, travel, poetry and many other subjects.

Christmas is coming



> Isabel and Sophia have tried and tested their amazing 'star making' skills

CHRISTMAS is coming... directly to the homes of school children in the Willington Team area this year.

Rev Julie Mooney of Church of the Good Shepherd Battle Hill told us: "Our Christingle and Crib service on Christmas Eve is so popular and a tremendous opportunity for outreach to the community.

"Last year 240 people joined us for worship. That's about 200 people more in church than we expect for our usual Sunday services.

"We realised we couldn't hold our service in the same way this year but we didn't want to miss this wonderful mission opportunity. So instead of families coming to our church building for their Christmas worship and joy we are delivering it to each child in Denbeigh, Hadrian Park and Battle Hill Primary Schools.

"Our Licensed Lay Reader Jean Moore has organised a team of helpers who have made up the packs for 1200 children. The pack, created at a very small cost, contains details of our online worship services as well as the Comfort and Joy resources. It also contains a prayer and lots of Christmas crafts and activities for children to do in their own home.

"We are asking the children to make two prayer stars – one to display in their window at home and one to be returned to our church building, for display in the window.

For anyone who wants ideas, here is a list of the craft activities in the Christmas pack: make two prayer stars, make a crib, colour in the nativity scene, spot the difference, colour in the stable 'smells', Christmas story word search.

Love builds hope

It can feel as though hope is in short supply at the moment. The season of Advent and the approach of Christmas, however, are a powerful reminder that, contrary to appearances, hope does glimmer around us. It just doesn't look like we expect it to look. On one level this shouldn't surprise us. Jesus, hope for all the world, certainly didn't look like the people of his day expected him to look. The Jews of the first century had all their hopes pinned on a powerful, majestic king - what they got instead was a baby; they expected him to be in a palace - instead he was found where animals eat. The light that shone so vividly in the darkness was certainly nothing like anyone had thought he would be.

At this time of year, and especially this year as we trudge onwards through what feels like never-ending Covid uncertainty, fear and grief, it is worth reminding ourselves again and again that hope has always appeared among us at an unexpected time and in unexpected form. The Jesus whose birth we prepare to celebrate brings the kind of hope we can neither imagine nor anticipate.

It is so easy to imagine that we need to go looking for hope, that we need to generate it, somehow; that if we try hard enough we'll be able to conjure hope by our own efforts. In fact, hope creeps up on us when we least expect it; hope can spring up in even the darkest and most despairing of times and one of the factors that causes it to happen is love. When we can forget ourselves sufficiently to care deeply for those around us, when we reach with compassion beyond our own needs, anxieties and concerns, then hope can stir. This hope, however, is not a thin, inward looking hope for ourselves but a hope for the whole world, the world that God created and loved so much that he sent his only Son - the unexpected, unimagined embodiment of hope.

Christian Aid's theme this Advent and Christmas is precisely this - that love builds hope, when we reach out beyond ourselves to care for God's world, then hope grows and

By Helen Cunningham, Church Engagement & Fundraising Officer (North East & Cumbria) 



> This Christmas your gifts will build hope for women like Kumana in Ethiopia.
Picture: Christian Aid/Elizabeth Dalziel

hope is built. Or as the apostle Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 13 - 'faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.'

When crisis threatens, love builds hope. Love builds hope in some of the world's toughest places. Love builds resilience in some of the world's fiercest climates.

In Ethiopia, and around the world, people living in poverty are on the frontline of the climate crisis. Families are losing water, food, homes and livelihoods. Every day they walk further, dig deeper, work harder, and build stronger to survive.

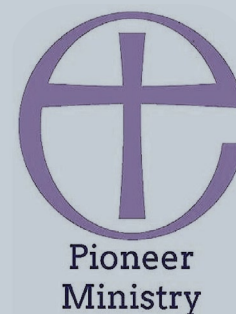
This Christmas, we stand united with mums like Kumana who, in the face of devastating drought, wanted to build a more hopeful future for her children.

and tools to set up a thriving aloe vera soap-making business. Using the drought-resistant aloe vera plant that was native to the area and thrived in the climate where other crops failed, Kumana has been able to make a living for her family and build a more hopeful future.

"The money from our soap production is not only for food, but also for clothes and teaching materials for my children," Kumana said. "We need support for other women, so they can be like us!"

This Christmas your gifts will build hope for women like Kumana.

■ Find more Advent and Christmas resources, including a video of Dr Paula Gooder's full sermon (excerpt above), at caid.org.uk/hope



By Beth Rookwood,
Bishop's Adviser in
Pioneer Ministry

Getting CHAORDIC!!

OUR Mixed Ecology Learning Pathway is going well. Nine of us are exploring what it might be to have new christian communities/fresh expressions/churches that are both different from and linked to our parish congregations. Broad questions like 'how can the church love and serve the community and explore spirituality within it?' are causing us to theologially reflect together around areas of mission and 'what is church?', and more specific questions like 'what are the desire lines' in our community (natural walkways and spiritual footfall) are causing us to shift how we have previously pursued evangelism and community development.

Today's question 'how are you getting chaordic?' needed some explaining! This term - a mixture of the words 'chaos' and 'order' describes a space that is happy to sit between the two, recognising the value of what can emerge in that deliberately in-between space that is neither crazily-chaotic, nor overly-ordered.

If a space (activity, conversation, meeting etc) is in chaos, then it is likely that people in it won't feel safe to be there, or speak up, or then even to show up. If a space (activity, conversation, meeting etc) is too ordered, then creativity and innovation can be crushed and again, not all voices, opinions or questions are welcomed. Neither chaos, nor order are preferable to encouraging creativity and adaptation.

A chaordic space, then, is a space (activity, conversation, meeting etc) where the pace is slowed down, where there is time to think, ponder, reflect, experiment and explore, and where all voices are actively encouraged to speak and are then valued and listened to. Respect is built, and power balances are actively shifted so that diversity is affirmed and genuine relationships are nurtured. Chaordic spaces have been found to be fertile for deep wisdom and rich decision making - for ownership, for authenticity, for community building.

As we explored it, we asked ourselves - how 'chaordic' are the spaces we live and minister in? Which voices are valued, and how can we invite others to be with us on the journey of exploring mission, discipleship and community? We wondered if these spaces might be one of the keys, and golden nuggets to releasing new and contextual ideas in our life and ministry. How about you? How chaordic are your spaces?! For more information, have a look at Emily Bradbury's work, found at www.couragetothrive.org.uk and for info on pioneer ministry in Newcastle Diocese, contact revbethrookwood@gmail.com

north east
Religious Resources
your religious learning resources centre
www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk

Current RRC opening hours

Until 1 December, the RRC is on limited opening: 1.30-5.30pm Monday to Friday for:

- Click and Collect
- Returns
- Online, email and social media contact
- Telephone support as required

Providing Government advice allows, we will be opening as usual from Wednesday 2 December but this situation is fluid so please check our website at www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk/covid-19/ and social media for any updates.

RRC Christmas holiday closure

The RRC will close from 5.30pm on Wednesday 16 December until 10am Tuesday 5 January.

We intend to re-open as usual from that date, Government regulations allowing, but please do check our website at www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk/covid-19/ and social media for live updates.

Which magazine is best?

THE search is on for Britain's best church magazine. Entries are now invited for the annual competition run by the Association for Church Editors (ACE).

"Church magazines are often a forgotten but effective means of communication," says Sally Churchus, Chair of the national organisation, "so we are keen to encourage editors everywhere."

For the coming 2021 competition, which closes on February 1st, awards will be made for any sized church magazine, excluding A5, and printed in colour. The Gold Award winner will receive the John King Trophy, to be held for one year, while Silver and Bronze Awards will receive an inscribed trophy to keep, together with a Certificate of Excellence for display.

A panel of judges assesses each magazine, giving points for various aspects including cover design, headlines and clarity of the Christian message. The prize-giving is open to everyone, to be held, hopefully, at Westminster Central Hall on 19 June 2021. The event will include a lecture and workshop on effective magazines.

■ For more information on how to apply, visit churchmag.uk/2021-awards/



> The Gold Award winner will receive the John King Trophy