

# LINK

The magazine for the Diocese of Newcastle

SPRING 2024

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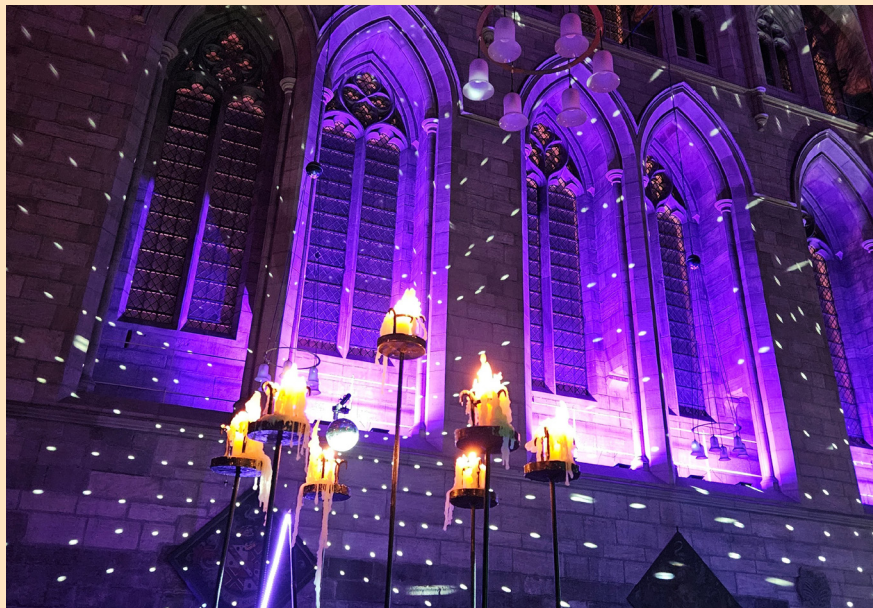


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## About this magazine

**Feedback:** [communications@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:communications@newcastle.anglican.org) or 0191 270 4100 and ask to be put through to the Communications Team.

**Sustainability:** We use a Carbon Balanced printer to produce this publication. The printer works with global



conservation charity World Land Trust (WLT) to preserve critically threatened habitats. The printer has measured and balanced the CO<sub>2</sub> impacts of all fossil fuel usage, transportation and electricity consumption. WLT offsets these emissions by protecting threatened habitats that would have otherwise been lost, avoiding the release of stored carbon. This also enables the regeneration of degraded habitats, which gradually re-absorb atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>.

# A message from Bishop Helen-Ann



The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley.

**have a vivid memory of celebrating Easter once during a University term-time when I was student. Observations of the Holy Week were interspersed with the usual routine of lectures and student life.**

I remember it for two reasons: firstly the way in which the Holy Week journey was very much immersed in the day-to-day stuff of life. I don't remember it being a problem, just interesting how the week unfolded with essay deadlines working alongside the liturgical drama of Jesus' journey to the cross and through it to the resurrection.

My second reason for remembering it is the rather dramatic early Easter morning experience that I took part in. The University chaplaincy had arranged for an early service in the ruins of the Cathedral in the town where I was studying, (the ruins being a casualty of the 16th century Scottish Reformation).

I was to lead a small group into the castle evoking the narrative of the women who

arrived early in the morning to tend to Jesus' body in the tomb. I had my script in hand, and off we set. Being on the east coast of Scotland perhaps we shouldn't have been overly surprised that it was a very windy morning (the ruined Cathedral is quite exposed to the elements).

What unfolded was a process whereby another group huddled in the distance round a fire shouted things at the group I was leading, which we couldn't hear, and nor could they hear what I was trying to say. And to top it all off, the strong wind carried my script out of my hands anyway!

As I recall, the basic outline of the narrative was the group by the fire asked who we were looking for, to which I was to reply 'Jesus, who was crucified' to which the response repeated several times was: 'he is not here, he is risen from the dead!'

This leads me to reflect on how we proclaim the message of Lent, Holy Week and Easter: a

message which does not lose its power and profound hope for our communities and our world (and our own lives).

'We have a message to proclaim' the hymn begins, but how and when we do that must change according to where we are and the circumstances of the people we are with.

Encouragement to take part in the drama and journey of faith is at the root of the work of evangelising. Encouraging people to ask questions, to discover faith in God and to root that in their own lives. This process will change us too and change the life of the Church.

My prayer this Easter is for the journey from death to life to take hold of each of us in new and surprising ways. We're not quite there yet, but we will be soon. Go with the journey, watch out for the weather systems, and rejoice when the day of Jesus' resurrection finally arrives!

**Bishop Helen-Ann**

# Bishop Helen-Ann - a year as



**October 2023: Bishop Helen-Ann welcomed the Very Revd Lee Batson as the new Dean of Newcastle.**

It has been quite a journey for Bishop Helen-Ann since it was announced back in October 2022 that she was to become the 13th Bishop of Newcastle.

The Archbishop of York, the Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell, confirmed election of Helen-Ann as Bishop, during a service at York Minster in February 2023.

On 22 April 2023, around a thousand people gathered at Newcastle Cathedral for her service of inauguration (see picture on page one).

Here's a look back at some of the highlights from the past year.



**February to April 2023: Getting to know the Diocese – Bishop Helen-Ann visited each deanery. Pictured here with Tynemouth Deanery.**



**September 2023: Bishop Helen-Ann with Sir Brendan Foster after completing the Great North Run.**



**October 2023: Bishop Helen-Ann was introduced into the House of Lords. Pictured here with Bishop of Derby, Libby Lane and Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally.**



**3 February 2023: Confirmation of Election at York Minster. Pictured here with the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell.**

# Bishop of Newcastle



January 2024: Representing our region: Bishop Helen-Ann was delighted to attend a reception at 10 Downing Street to celebrate the Laing Art Gallery being chosen as their 'Museum in Residence', exposing new audiences to North East heritage.



July 2023: Bishop Helen-Ann ordained three deacons and seven priests during Petertide.



February 2024: Bishop Helen-Ann joined Warkworth Church of England Primary School to celebrate Candlemas.



January 2024: Growing Younger: Bishop Helen-Ann commissioned our Beyond Youth team to work with children and young people in South East Northumberland.



August 2023: Launch of the Shaun on the Tyne installation in aid of St. Oswald's Hospice. Pictured here with 'Sheep Ahoy' who was based at Newcastle Cathedral, and artist Joanne Wishart.



October 2023: Bishop Helen-Ann was delighted to join other local faith leaders to mark the opening of a brand new multi-faith prayer room at Newcastle International Airport.

# Revitalising a church as 'The Adventure'

**A** church in Newcastle has seen exciting growth after a revitalisation project got underway last year.

St Luke's Newcastle, on Claremont Street, Spital Tongues, is a historic church in the diocese dating back to the 1800s.

The Revd Adam Smith, curate at St Thomas', was appointed as church leader at St Luke's in September 2023, after having spent time getting to know the church family since January of that year. St Thomas', the diocesan Resource Church, is committed to the planting and revitalisation of churches.

As this 'church graft' was commissioned in January of this year, Adam and the existing St Luke's congregation were joined by a 'grafting team' of 20 adults and 10 children from St Thomas'. Together as one new church family, they are seeking out what new thing God is calling St Luke's to.

Adam explained: "The team is key to any church revitalisation project and we're no exception. As those from St Thomas' have

grafted into what was already here we've gained a new energy, and are learning from each other as we grow together towards the next chapter for St Luke's.

"Everyone at St Luke's wants to grow by seeing new Christians and to help them as they learn to walk daily with Jesus. It's the responsibility of all of us to be a part of that, by telling others about how Jesus has worked in our own lives and inviting them into a relationship with him, this is so much easier when we do it together."

In conjunction with Junction 42, a charity that works to transform the lives of ex-offenders, St Luke's hosts a missional community called Connect.

It enables people from all walks of life to share a meal at St Luke's, hear God's word and enjoy great fellowship. Adam said this is a good gateway into the church for those who may initially feel intimidated by the idea.

"We have those recovering from addiction and people who we would perhaps not normally expect to see in church," he said. "It characterises where we are heading and why we



Church Leader Adam Smith with Associate Leader Alice Wilkinson.

are here.

"Long-term, our hope and prayer is that St Luke's can be a space for equipping whole-life discipleship. If people have been through difficult times and they need support with

## Bubble Church - fun-filled services for children and parents

Young children and families at a Newcastle church are enjoying dedicated services with puppets and other interactive features.

The monthly services are now on offer at St Bartholomew's Church in Longbenton, which has become the first in the diocese to sign up to the national Bubble Church initiative.

Bubble Church is a Sunday church service especially for babies, toddlers, children up to the age of seven and their families.

Starting at 9am, the services begin with coffee and croissants, before 30 minutes of Jesus-cen-



Father Mark Oliver (right), the Revd Benjamin Jarvis and others gather for Bubble Church.

tered song, story and prayer, with puppets used to tell stories from the Bible.

Vicar, the Revd Benjamin Jarvis, said St Bar-

tholomew's has now hosted two monthly Bubble Church services after signing up to the national initiative which originally grew out of the coronavirus pandemic, at a time when peo-

# Begins' at St Luke's



money management, counselling or they might need to put some order and structure into their lives, we want to walk with them.

"It's very early days at St Luke's but these are some of our hopes for the future as we continue to grow."

The tagline for St Luke's is 'The Adventure Begins' and Adam believes this accurately

reflects where this growing church is in its revitalisation.

St Luke's is welcoming and family friendly, informal and full of energy. Other initiatives include midweek groups for study and prayer.

**For more information visit:**  
[www.stlukes.church](http://www.stlukes.church)

ple found themselves socialising in bubbles.

"We decided last year to give it a go," said Ben. "We already have a healthy junior church for older children and Bubble Church really complements what we're already trying to do. "It was a step into the unknown, but thankfully there's been real support for Bubble Church. What I particularly appreciate is that it is unashamedly an act of worship, but it's created especially for young families, and especially those with no church background."

Each month, the church receives a story and script from Bubble Church. Local volunteers serve as puppeteers who act out the story, while songs and related actions and activities, which include standing, waving and wearing hats and masks, are tailored around the story.

"The children and their parents have really engaged in it," said Ben. "They get up to sing, do their actions and it's a lot of fun. It feels like a service, rather than something like a messy

church. It's prayerful, worshipful and engaging."

Father Mark Oliver, honorary assistant priest at St Bartholomew's, is Bubble Church champion and said the initiative has appealed to people within the congregation, and has also attracted non-churchgoing families.

He said: "I really love doing this but part of me being Bubble Church champion is about empowering other people. You don't have to be a priest to do this role, it's about volunteers coming together to make a difference.

"My advice to other churches thinking about getting involved is that the service is ready made. Bubble Church puts together the liturgy and each service follows the same format. A 30 minute service works well. It gives us time for fellowship before and afterwards and it's a really positive environment."

Visit: [www.bubblechurch.org](http://www.bubblechurch.org)

## A message from our new Director of Mission and Ministry

The Revd Canon Dr Richard Whaite is delighted to be in the North East after starting his new role as our Director of Mission and Ministry in March.



The Revd Canon Dr Richard Whaite.

He will hold a lead responsibility for developing and overseeing the discipleship and ministry strategy for the diocese, including the training and equipping of lay and ordained leaders. Ric will also encourage and enable mission and practical evangelism in the parishes and deaneries, and support them in the diocesan vision 'Seeking, Sharing, Sending'.

Ric has joined our diocese from Chester, where he served as the Rector of St Mary Without-the-Walls. Educated in History and Theology in London, Oxford, Manchester and the United States, Ric was previously Chaplain at University College in Durham and served in parochial ministry in the Kensington Episcopal Area of the Diocese of London. He was born and grew up in Stockport.

"I'm delighted to be here," said Ric. "I have moved to a beautiful part of the country with a lot of heritage and history. People have a real sense of place here and I'm looking forward to hearing their stories and learning more.

"It is also about joining in prayer, mission and ministry with God's people here in the North East. I am anticipating an experience of joy. It feels humbling to be joining in the diocesan vision of 'Seeking, Sharing, Sending'.

"Turning to new horizons means moving with the hope that God goes ahead of us, with a joy and expectation of what we will find."

Ric was installed as an honorary Canon of Newcastle Cathedral in a service led by Bishop Helen-Ann on Sunday, 17 March.

**T**he sale of homemade jam and preserves have helped a two-church parish to widen its links with the local community. Revd Lee Cleminson, Vicar of St John's Church, Percy Main; and St Peter's, Balkwell; produces 28 jars of the fruit-filled delights every week, including jam and marmalade, chutneys, lemon and orange curd.

Over the past four years, sales of the products have raised over £15,000 towards church funds, which have enabled church repairs as well as other maintenance to be carried out. Charitable causes have also benefited, including Macmillan Cancer Care at consecutive coffee mornings.

Lee is a long-term jam maker having mastered recipes from his late grandmother, Gladys Nelson, and insists the initiative is not time consuming.

"It really has taken off," said Lee. "It started shortly before Covid four years ago. I made some jam ready to sell in church. Jen Dowsett, a member of the community, suggested mentioning it on the Percy Main Facebook page and it just spiralled from there.

"An eight-litre pan of jam will fill 28 jars. It takes about an hour, one morning per week and I'm an early riser, so I can get it done before work."

Lee uses fruit, sugar and lemon juice in his jams, a touch of the setting agent pectin when required, and a drop of alcohol in some varieties, such as plum and brandy jam.

# Homemade jam – the unlikely initiative taking a church community by storm



The Revd Lee Cleminson with churchwarden Jackie Chater.



"It's a real community effort," he added. "During the summer months, people generously donate fruit from their gardens and allotments, and they also donate things like sugar and jars. There's demand up and down the country, from Berwick to Devon, and our jam gets posted out to those living further afield. People like to buy jam not only for themselves, but also as gifts for others."

The jams and preserves can be obtained from the two churches, the vicarage and elsewhere

within both Percy Main and Balkwell.

"This has been a great way of engaging with the community," added Lee. "The fundraising has been remarkable but people know where the money is going. Getting repairs done has also enabled us to work with local tradespeople and the whole thing has increased the profile of our churches."

St John's will celebrate its 160th anniversary later this year. The church is currently planning events to commemorate the milestone. The jam will surely have a role to play in the celebrations.

## Have you considered representing your parish at Deanery Synod?

Deanery Synod members will be elected at your Parish's APCM and anyone who is on the electoral roll of the parish is welcome to stand for election.

The Deanery Synod is the governing body for a group of local parishes called a deanery. Its main job is to discuss and decide on church matters within that area.

Sometimes, it's also asked to consider mat-

ters referred to from the Diocesan Synod or the General Synod. It's where the parish's voice is heard beyond just the Parish Church Council (PCC).

Deanery Synod builds community among parishes and promotes the whole mission of the Church. It is an opportunity to meet people from other parishes and to work together to support each other with common problems.

Deaneries are an important part of the life of the diocese and it is important that the most suitable lay people are elected on to Deanery Synods.

So, if you would like to be part of shaping the future of your deanery then please speak to the priest-in-charge or a churchwarden if there is no incumbent.



A vicar took his chaplaincy duties with the RNLI a step further when he was invited to become part of his local crew.

Now, more than five years after he first joined the RNLI as chaplain, he has put on a lifejacket. Anthony O’Grady, vicar of Woodhorn with Newbiggin, enjoys his voluntary role, which he insists feels so natural.

“Both of these roles – as chaplain and crew member – play a significant part in my ministry and in my personal life,” said Anthony, who is based at the RNLI Newbiggin Lifeboat Station.

Having served his curacy at Christ Church with St Ann in Newcastle, Anthony arrived in Newbiggin five years ago and was happy to take on the role of RNLI chaplain.

After the annual lifeboat blessing service in 2022, Anthony was called upon to take an unexpected leap of faith.

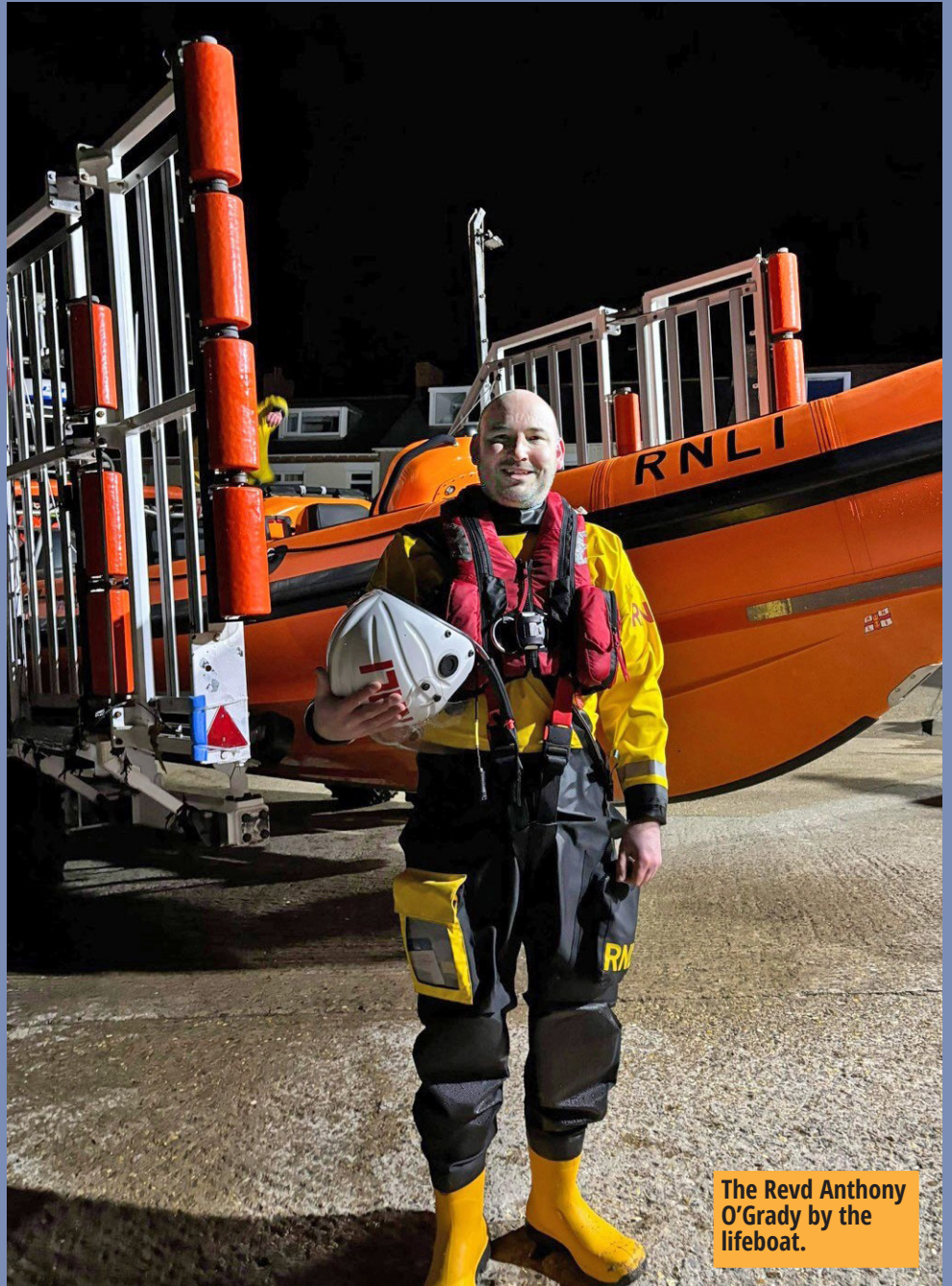
“They asked me to join the crew,” he said. “Before moving to Newbiggin something like this had not crossed my radar as I had never previously lived near a lifeboat station. I realised that I wanted to do it and it felt so natural to respond to the encouragement I had been given about signing up.”

Anthony was initially a member of the shore crew – carrying out key tasks on dry land as part of rescues and other missions, while his colleagues were called out in the lifeboat. Shore duties include ensuring the safety of the public, the crew and equipment, while also operating radio communications.

Having committed himself to weekly training sessions, Anthony is now a member of the lifeboat crew and like his colleagues, is part of a call-out rota, which means the station can be ready for call-outs around the clock.

“As individual members of a crew, we are on call when we are personally available,”

## RNLI chaplain took the plunge by becoming a full crew member



The Revd Anthony O’Grady by the lifeboat.

he explained. “Major incidents can emerge from people using the sea for leisure, such as swimmers or paddle boarders getting into difficulty, to fishermen and vessels in distress”.

Anthony remains a valued chaplain of the lifeboat station and has presided over a crew-related marriage, as well as bap-

tisms and funerals – and of course he gets to bless the lifeboat and fellow crew members every year.

“Being involved gives you a sense of belonging,” he said. “I previously had no seamanship experience and this has been brand new, but it has been a remarkable experience.”

**A** vicar has spoken of the benefits of using an electric vehicle (EV). The Revd Tom Birch, Vicar of Ovingham and Wylam, has had an EV charger installed at his vicarage.

Tom is one of the first to benefit from a new scheme being rolled out to install EV chargers at clergy properties to help with the switch to electric vehicles.

"The benefits of EVs are huge," said Tom. "As a vicar to rural parishes, it's essential that I have my own transport. My EV, a Nissan Leaf, is much cheaper to run than the diesel VW Golf it replaced."

Tom conservatively estimates (30p per kWh electricity) that fuel costs for his EV have dropped to 8.7 pence per mile as opposed to 19.8 ppm for his old Golf. Servicing costs are lower due to fewer parts needing replaced and no engine oil. Currently EVs have zero vehicle tax to pay.

Carbon emissions are lower too. Using an average for grid electricity carbon intensity in the past week driving a mile in his Leaf causes 47g of CO2 emissions as opposed to 343g for the Golf – more than seven times less.

These savings are further enhanced by using the smart charging technology. Tom's electric-

## Electric car scheme gets a test run in Newcastle Diocese



The Revd Tom Birch plugs his Nissan Leaf into the electric charging point at the vicarage in Wylam.

ity supplier (Octopus) offers a tariff of 7.5p per kWh between 11.30pm and 5.30am when demand on the electricity grid is lowest. Charged at this rate fuel cost per mile drops even further to 2.25 pence per mile. Carbon intensity of grid electricity is also generally lower at night.

Tom, who is on the Diocesan Environmental

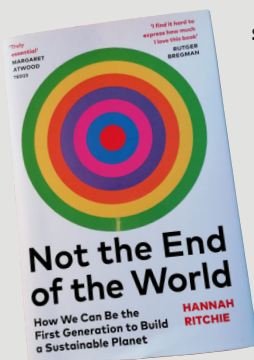
Working Group and in a former life was a climate change economist, added: "A smart charger is obviously great for me, but it's also good for society more widely.

"Most people don't think about it, but the national grid does an astounding job to balance the grid. At any time, the grid needs roughly

Most Saturdays, before breakfast, I try and get a swim in the sea. Ah, the joys of being up early. I head down to Cullercoats Bay. A good session of hearty backstroke, and I feel the benefit all day.

The other week, I'd done my swim, and was standing in the water looking out to sea. Suddenly I noticed that the sun was about to rise. I stood in the water transfixed and watched this glorious thing. I watched till the sun was fully up, and then staggered out, staggered by what I had seen.

Moments like that make me so determined. Determined to do everything I can to make



## Environment



By the Revd Tim Mayfield, Bishop's Advisor on the Environment

sure that we hand on this beautiful planet to our descendants. Determined to do everything I can to build the low-carbon economy our grandchildren need.

But it's not looking good, is it? One whiff that environmental policies might not be vote winners has seen both major parties row back on their commitments. We need something to keep our hope alive, to encourage us to 'keep on keeping on'.

That's why Hannah Ritchie's book 'Not the End of the World' arrived like a glorious sun rising. Hannah works for the website 'Our World in

Data', highlighting research into the world's largest problems.

'Not the End of the World' is packed with graphs showing hopeful hard data. The global child mortality rate... the numbers of women dying in childbirth... people living longer in all regions of the world... the share of the world population living in poverty... the number of children per woman falling rapidly across the world. All these issues heading in the right direction (and that's just by page 32...)

Hannah Ritchie's chapter on 'Climate Change' is inspirational. She demonstrates that per capita coal emissions are a fraction of rich



A small watertight box is connected to the outside wall.

the same amount to be generated or imported as people are using. More people using smart charging helps to balance the grid, allows greater uses of renewable energy and plays a part in lowering the carbon intensity of grid electricity."

The rollout is being funded by the Diocesan Board of Finance with help from HM Government, through grants available to landlords to install EV charge points and supporting infrastructure.

The scheme is in the early stages and so far to date 31 smart EV chargers have been installed with plans to roll out more widely in the coming months.

## Pancake parties



Many churches across the Diocese marked the beginning of Lent with pancake parties.

St Mary's Monkseaton welcomed over 80 adults and children. The clever team in the kitchen, turned 50 eggs, 6 litres of milk, nearly 3 kilos of flour and a mound of toppings, into a feast that ensured no-one went home hungry!

St Columba's Wideopen used the event as an



opportunity to raise £150 for Ukraine from donations.

**We'd love to hear more stories of parishes using innovative ways to engage with their communities. Please share your stories with the communications team at [communications@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:communications@newcastle.anglican.org). Please remember to get consent to use photos in Link before sending.**

**countries in the past... that global per capita carbon dioxide emissions have peaked (and that total emissions will peak soon) ... that many countries have separated economic growth from carbon dioxide emissions... and that coal is now dying across the world.**

**We still have a long way to go. But the journey is so much better fuelled by hope. And if you're wondering what you can do, here are Hannah Ritchie's top five tips:**

- Give up your SUV
- Go car-free
- Have a plant-based diet
- Avoid transatlantic flight
- Buy green energy

Yours in hope,  
Tim Mayfield



# Eco awards for churches in Newburn Parish

**T**wo churches in Newburn Parish have both received Silver Eco Church Awards for their commitment to environmental goals. The achievements by St Mary's and St Michael's have been recognised by the charity A Rocha UK, which equips Christians, churches and dioceses to protect and restore God's creation.

The silver award, which comes three years after both churches achieved bronze status, ensures the churches have excelled in four main areas: worship and teaching; management of buildings and land; community and global engagement; and lifestyle.

Helen Dawson, Eco Champion for Newburn Parish, said everyone involved with both churches really got on board with the initiative and had worked hard to reach the silver standard.

"It has been a big effort to get there," said Helen, "but it's a considerable achievement and everyone can be proud of the part they have played."

Helen said local vicar, the Revd Allison Harding, ensures the environment is part of regular worship, with topical matters mentioned in sermons and dedicated prayers, while usually one hymn per Sunday service is chosen because of its relevance to God's creation.

Other initiatives have included wild areas in churchyards, ensuring a healthy space for wild flowers, birds, badgers, and even the occasional fox. Bird feeders and boxes have been installed, as well as bug hotels, while there has also been a move to grow edible plants.

Newburn Parish also hosts an eco-fair every year, which attracts local environmental charities who are able to engage with the community on key topics, such as recycling and climate change. There is also dedicated environment coverage on a website, social media and parish magazine, while the parish makes good use of its noticeboards to promote eco matters.

Helen, who has a degree in countryside man-



The Revd Allison Harding and Eco Champion Helen Dawson with the A Rocha UK Silver Eco Church Awards.

agement, has been involved with both bronze and silver awards for Newburn Parish and has been impressed by the response of congregation members.

"Everyone has taken it on board and we have a good platform for sharing eco-tips and ideas," she explained. "Allison is very much behind what we are doing and we have a contemporary service once a month, which offers a focus

on the environment and creation."

Both St Mary's and St Michael's are fair trade churches. They also host small business fairs that promote support for local firms.

Allison said: "It is Helen's drive and passion for the environment that has enabled us to achieve these awards. She keeps us focused and on track, always leading by example."



The Rt Revd Mark Wroe,  
Bishop of Berwick.

## Racial Justice - a key priority in our mission

**‘Freedom is coming!’ is an exuberant South African song of praise which arose during the Apartheid period. The second verse, ‘Jesus is coming!’ positions it clearly as a song of faith and a prayer for transformation. It was one of many spiritual songs sung on the ‘long walk to freedom’ in that period.**

It reminds me that the work of racial justice is not just a good thing to do, nor yet another thing to put right in church and society, but part of our journey towards Jesus Christ. Though progress may be slow, and it feels glacial to me at the moment, racial justice is part of Christ’s irresistible work of reconciling all things with God, as Paul describes in Colossians 1.

In December last year, Diocesan Synod passed ten recommendations for ways in which our Diocese might engage more intentionally with

racial justice, to be implemented over the next five years. You can read the full report on the Racial Justice page of the diocesan website ([newcastle.anglican.org/racial-justice](http://newcastle.anglican.org/racial-justice)) but the first two recommendations are:

The Diocesan Synod reaffirms that all people are created in the image of God and are equal, and recognises that Racial Justice is a particular focus which sits within a larger commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in our diocese.

The Diocesan Synod affirms Racial Justice as a key priority for each one of us in our mission and is an urgent response to some of the injustices, inequalities and prejudices experienced daily in our communities and churches, yet unseen by many in our congregations.

A further part of this work is establishing a Racial Justice Task Group. If you are interested in being involved, please be in touch with me.

There remain deep injustices, and prejudices about race and ethnicity continue to abound. But we wait and pray hopefully and expectantly looking to Jesus Christ. In this, I am hugely helped by Selina Stone’s Lent Book ‘Tarry Awhile: Wisdom from Black Spirituality for People of Faith’. When Jesus prays in Gethsemane, he invites his disciples to pray with him, in the words of the Authorised Version: ‘tarry ye here, and watch with me.’ (Matthew 26.38 KJV) This phrase gave rise to the practice of ‘tarrying’, described in the book as ‘a time of surrender to God in the hope of personal and communal transformation.’

Tarrying is not wasted time, it is time surrendered to God – surrendering our prejudices and seeking forgiveness, reconciliation and transformation. As we continue with our racial justice work, I hope you might pray with me ‘Freedom is coming!’

**Bishop Mark**

# Survivors of church-based abuse host special LOUDfence service at Newcastle Cathedral



Left to right: The Very Revd Lee Batson (Dean of Newcastle), The Revd Canon Peter Dobson (Canon for Outreach and Discipleship at Newcastle Cathedral), The Rt Revd Mark Wroe (Bishop of Berwick), Sarah Troughton (Survivor), Peter Locke (Survivor), Antonia Sobocki (LOUDfence Director), David Creese (Survivor), Maggi Creese (Lead Officer, Chaplaincy to Survivors) and The Rt Revd Stephen Wright (Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle).

**A** special service took place at Newcastle Cathedral as part of a five-day LOUDfence event in support of victims and survivors of church-based abuse.

The 'Service of the Word' was led by survivors and was planned by Sarah Troughton, David Creese and Peter Locke, all of whom have experienced church-based abuse and were brought together by the Chaplaincy to Survivors. The service, on 6 March was attended by senior church clergy, including Bishop Mark; the Dean of Newcastle, the Very Revd Lee Batson; and The Rt Revd Stephen Wright (Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle).

The LOUDfence event saw temporary fences erected inside and outside the cathedral from 4 to 8 March for people to tie on brightly coloured ribbons in solidarity with all victims and survivors of abuse. Parishes across the Diocese were invited to knit or crochet 'loud' woollen strawberries to attach to the fences, inspired by artwork from the 'If I told You, What Would You Do?' project, to engage with survi-



Knitted and crocheted woollen strawberries on display at Newcastle Cathedral.

vors of faith-based abuse.

Inside the cathedral, unique artwork created by Sarah, David and Peter was on public display.

Newcastle Cathedral worked in co-ordination with the City's St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathe-

dral, which also joined in the LOUDfence event with similar fences being erected and an opening Mass, which took place on 3 March.

The original idea behind the international movement LOUDfence, which started in Australia in 2015, was to tie brightly coloured ribbons to a fence as a sign of support for and

# Amy signs up as social work student in Newcastle Diocese

A social work student has been appointed for a second successive year by Newcastle Diocese.

Amy Fenwick joined the safeguarding team at the end of January to start a 70-day placement. She is following in the footsteps of Sarah White, who became the first social work student in the Diocese during her successful placement here in 2023.

A graduate of Sunderland University, Amy is from Killingworth and has a degree in community and youth work. Her role with the Diocese is part of a masters in social work, which Amy is also undertaking with Sunderland University.

During her time with the Diocese, Amy will work with the central safeguarding team and will support churches and church communities.

She will be part of Newcastle Cathedral's

mission to support the homeless and will also contribute to the work of the Hope Centre in Cramlington, which provides a foodbank, access to school uniforms, other clothing and nursery equipment. It also offers bereavement support, a craft group and a club for jobseekers.

A key focus of Amy's work will be around young people. She will visit schools in the Diocese and will also support the Beyond Youth team, which was established in South East Northumberland last year.

Amy already serves as a youth worker with the YMCA at St Paul's Church, Willington Quay, and is keen to explore social work and safeguarding within a church setting.

She said: "It's an

exciting opportunity to be with the Diocese of Newcastle for this placement and I look forward to meeting people in different settings.

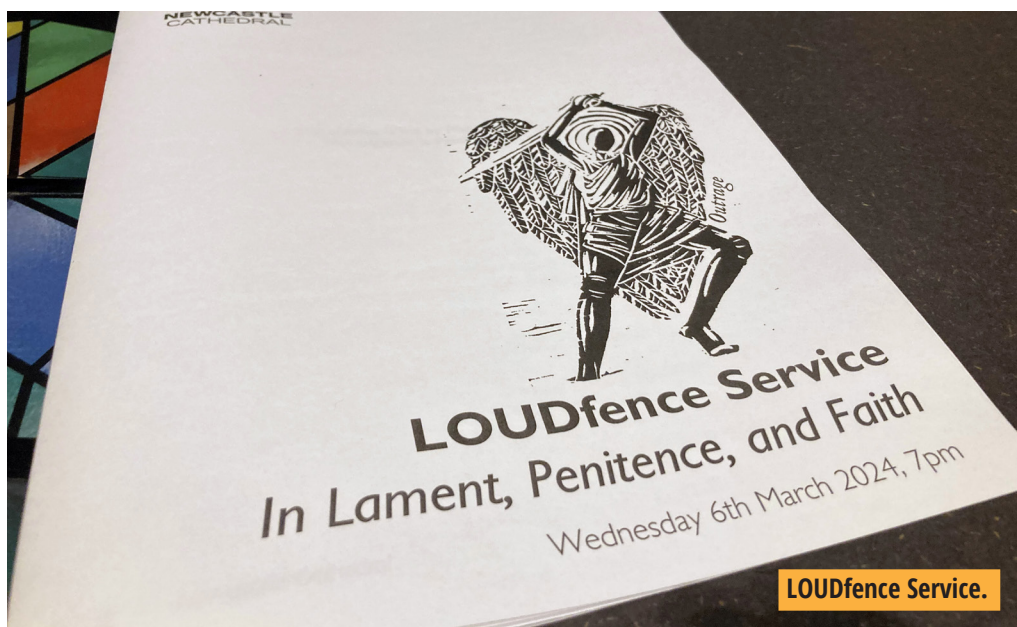
"I like to support children and young people in their learning and development. There will be opportunities to do that and also get involved with other important initiatives."

Amy will also spend time with Chaplaincy to Survivors in the Diocese, and will also contribute to the LOUDfence project, which supports victims and survivors of church-based abuse.

For more information on Chaplaincy to Survivors, visit [www.newcastle.anglican.org/chaplaincy-to-survivors](http://www.newcastle.anglican.org/chaplaincy-to-survivors)



Social work student Amy Fenwick.



LOUDfence Service.

solidarity with victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. The fences express support for all those harmed by any form of abuse in the Church and the 'loud' ribbons represent a determination to break the silence around abuse.

Survivor Peter Locke, who jointly planned the

service, said: "The experience of working on this project with Sarah and David has helped me to rebuild my self-confidence and trust in others. I have a long way to go, but I am using my musical skills and knowledge to help others, and I hope that this will continue.

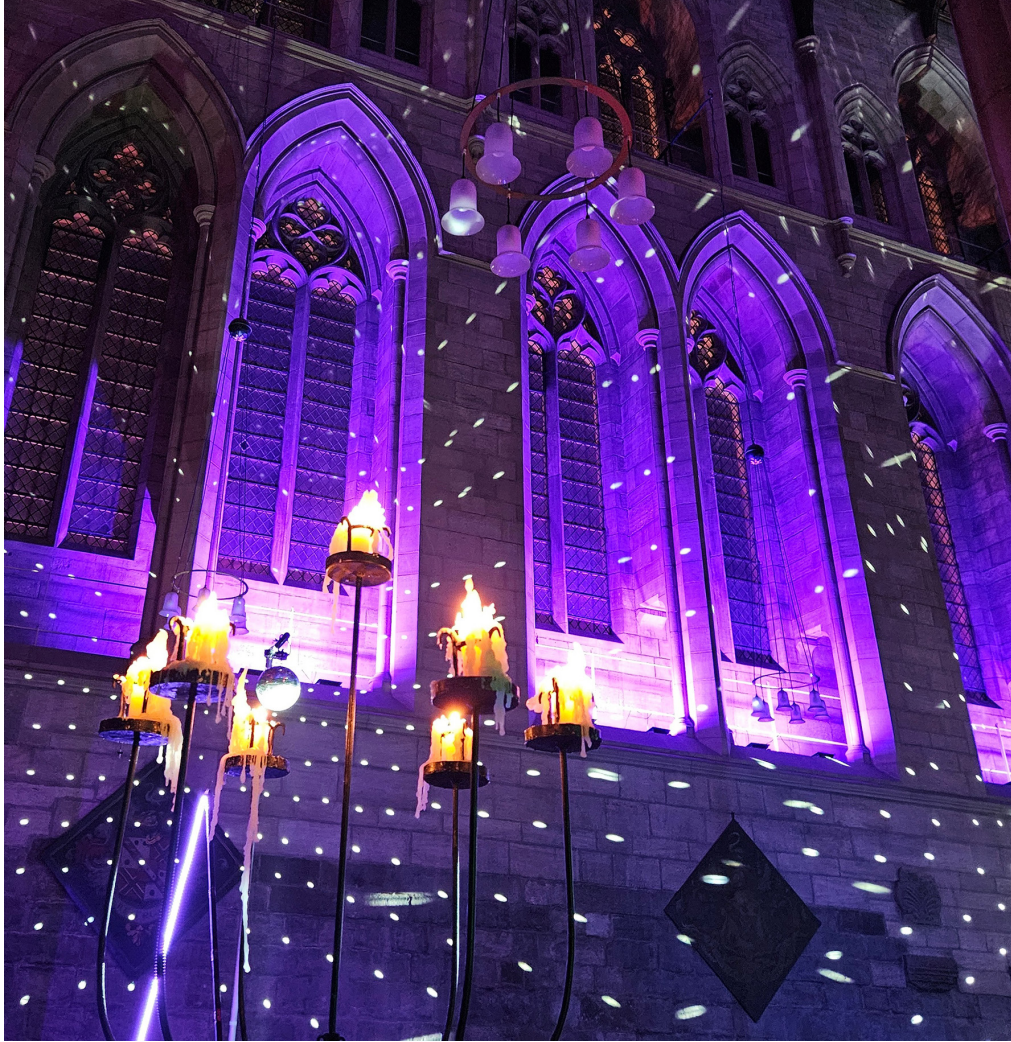
"We are all entitled to trust and to be trusted.

We are all entitled to have our voices heard. We need confidence to speak and to be listened to in confidence, and with confidentiality. We need neither gossip, nor slander. I hope that the Church will continue to work to be a Christian presence in every community, including the community of the hurt, injured and wounded."

Bishop Helen-Ann said: "I am extremely proud to support the LOUDfence event and am grateful to Sarah, David and Peter for planning this special service at Newcastle Cathedral. In the Diocese of Newcastle, we are absolutely committed to being innovative in the ways we engage with victims and survivors. It is essential that their voices are heard if our church communities are to be safe spaces for everyone.

"As a Church, we must place the needs of all victims and survivors at the core of who we are and what we do and I want to thank everyone who joined in this LOUDfence event, which was planned by survivors to powerfully illustrate the importance of breaking the silence around historic abuse."

# Abbey is quite a picture as it marks



**A** year of celebrations to mark Hexham Abbey's 1,350th anniversary throughout 2024 is well underway – and a spectacular opening weekend of activities has been hailed a resounding success.

Visitors turned out in numbers over the weekend of 2-4 February for a *Festival of Flame*, which saw the historic Abbey illuminated both inside and out, with the impressive installation including both candles and music. The display even created the illusion of sheep in the Abbey grounds, as well as an impressive 'flame garden'.

The weekend also included the launch of *Stars for Eternity*, with no fewer than 5,000 origami stars suspended high above the Abbey's old choir stalls - each star representing someone special from past or present, nominated by local people.

The *Festival of Flame* is the product of a collaboration between Hexham Abbey, Queen's Hall Arts, and Hexham Community Partnership.

Jez Light, Associate Producer, Queen's Hall Arts and operations manager at Hexham Community Partnership, has been working closely with the Abbey, where he previously served as events operations manager, on this project.

He said: "For the 1,350 launch we wanted to have some fun with the Abbey's heritage, so we created a Viking invasion of the refectory garden.

"We also showcased the Abbey's Phelps Organ in its 50th year with a recital that included modern as well as more traditional music. The four interwoven triquetra created from hundreds of candles on the floor of the north transept was an idea originally borrowed from Ripon Cathedral's Candlemas celebrations.

"Ripon, which shares the same founder in St Wilfrid, was also the original inspiration for the *Stars for Eternity* installation of 6,000 origami paper stars hung high above the chancel."



People gather at the Flame Garden during the Festival of Flame.



# a special anniversary

*Pictures: Visit Hexham / Hexham Community Partnership  
Jason Thompson, the Bigger Picture Agency Ltd*



**Bishop Helen-Ann and the Revd Canon David Glover cut the anniversary cake.**



**The Stars for Eternity display.**

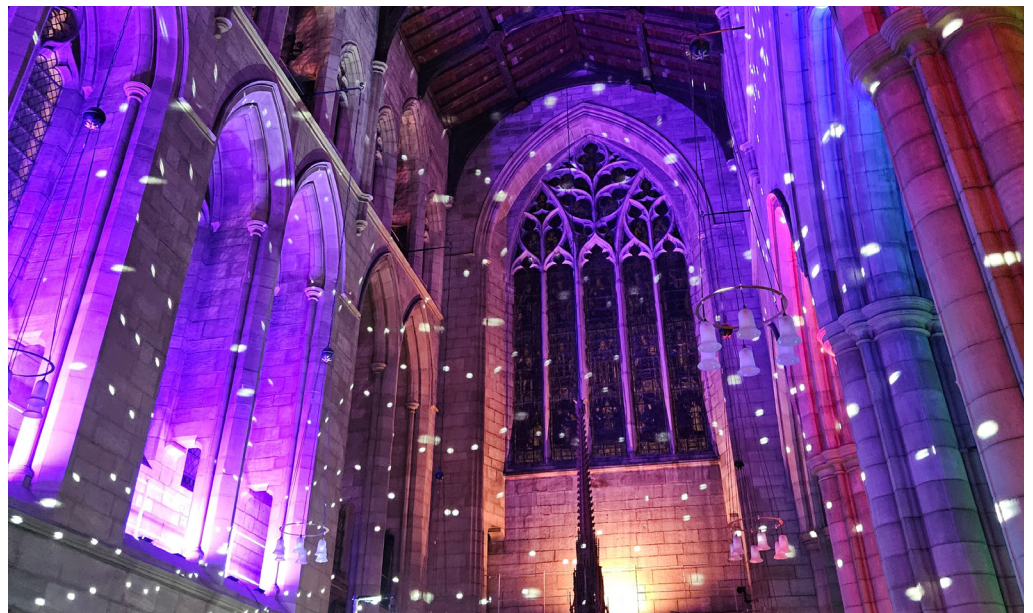
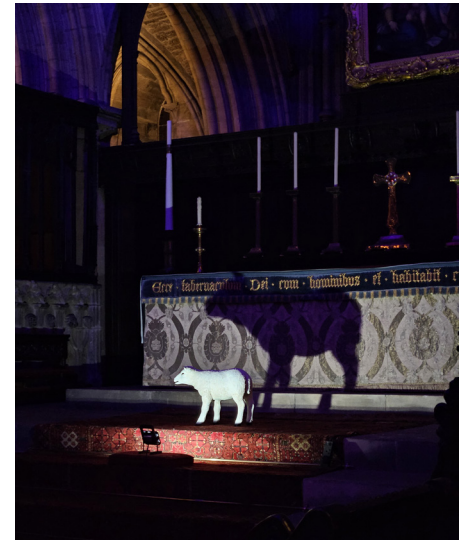


The Illuminated Sheep first appeared at the Abbey in 2022 as part of Northumberland's response to the visit to the Lindisfarne Gospels to the North East, funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority.

The 1,350 launch was part-funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with the North of Tyne Combined Authority as the lead authority.

As part of the opening weekend, Bishop Helen-Ann joined the Revd Canon David Glover, the Rector of Hexham Abbey, for a special service on Sunday, 4 February.

Other events will take place throughout 2024. Visit [www.hexhamabbey.org.uk/1350](http://www.hexhamabbey.org.uk/1350)



# Early years provision 'sets our children up for life'



**Bishop Helen-Ann with Interim Diocesan Director of Education Gill Booth.**

**T**he education of our youngest children took centre stage at a key meeting of church and school leaders in Newcastle and Durham dioceses.

Bishop Helen-Ann opened the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Conference at the Delta Marriott Hotel, Gateshead, on 7 February, where she highlighted the importance of early years provision in setting our children up for life.

At the conference, sponsored by Vision for Education and organised by the Joint Education Team (JET) for Durham and Newcastle dioceses, the Bishop was joined by Interim Diocesan Director of Education, Gill Booth, Amy Cookson from AK Consultancy, a range of educational speakers, headteachers and other leaders in early years provision, as well as representatives from other

## Wellies&Wonder - Forest school nursery is fun and educational

A church school in the Diocese has opened a forest school nursery to give young pupils a taste of the natural world.

Named Wellies&Wonder@Ellingham, the 10-place offering has been created at Ellingham Church of England Primary in Northumberland, with provision for both indoor and outdoor learning.

Predominantly for two-year-old children, however, the facilities can also be used by older pupils across school for some forest school activities.

Wellies&Wonder provides access to an enclosed outdoor environment in the school's woodland, which was planted as part of a big community effort last year, on land owned by the Ellingham Estate. Trees have been kindly provided by Northumberland County Council and the Woodland Trust.

Children also use the school hall, where a range of indoor activities are available to welcome pupils into the school environment and make them feel secure.

Once they are suitably dressed and prepared, the engaging forest school provision includes a



plethora of exciting attractions. These include a mud kitchen, different sensory areas with gravel, bark and compost for digging and building, while wooden blocks and other items are used for loose parts play.

There's also a nature haven for wildlife to observe the creatures and birds which share the site, as well as spaces for planting and growing

healthy food.

An attractive seating area is available for snack times, crafts and even camp fires, while the forest school will soon have a Polycrub shelter, where children can access mark making, games and toys, as well as providing much needed shelter from the elements when necessary.

# declares Bishop at Joint Education conference

supporting organisations.

Bishop Helen-Ann used her opening speech to pay tribute to teachers and others involved in the development of the early years age group.

“The foundations are laid in the early years,” she said. “It sets children up for life. It is not a short-term thing. That’s the importance of what you do as practitioners of early years.”

Gill Booth said: “The conference was a great opportunity for early years specialists to meet and share their expertise, as well as to hear from some inspirational guest speakers and contributions from early years leaders from different schools and organisations.”

Amy Cookson added: “I’m blown away by the work you do for our young children. You’re always asking how we can improve things and there have been so many opportunities since the pandemic where you have ensured that our youngest children are at the heart of all we do.”

Following the opening speeches, a day of workshops equipped the early years professionals with a wide range of support to take into their everyday work.

Gill concluded: “Feedback was incredibly positive and we had an extremely fruitful day. We are now planning for our next educational conference in June which is aimed at chairs of governors and headteachers.”



Headteacher Diane Lakey said the forest school provision currently runs for two days per week, but hopefully this will expand to three days in the near future.

She added: “We are a small school and Wellies&Wonder gives us a unique selling point. The community have been wonderful in their support of this initiative. It is popular with the children and their families and we are very excited about it.”

‘Wellies&Wonder’ was chosen by their Early Years Leader to be part of the provision name, as this had been the title of the memorable, outdoor Christmas nativity at Ellingham, during

Covid-19 restrictions, with livestock including sheep and a pony joining proceedings.

The school also has the use of other land nearby for forest school activities, behind St Maurice’s Church. Ideal for climbing and den building, it has taller trees and access to a composting toilet.

Diane has been on quite a journey with the school since first joining as a part-time teacher 25 years ago. She has now served as headteacher for the past 14 years and during that time, Ellingham has achieved multiple Eco-School Green Flag awards for its commitment to environmental education and action.



# 'A privilege to be Principal' – David's



Joy! The baptism of Emily Carling in the River Jordan (Holy Saturday 2023).

**T**he Principal of Lindisfarne College of Theology has announced he will retire from his post in the summer. The Revd Dr David Bryan said he had been “hugely privileged” to have led the college in training and supporting those who feel called to ordained or lay ministry.

“Time has flown by but I have absolutely loved it,” said David, who joined Lindisfarne in 2011 and served as Director of Studies for five years, before being installed as Principal in 2017.

“As a college we’ve given people support and confidence which has enabled them to widen their horizons and expectations.”

David’s journey to Principal of Lindisfarne has been long, eventful and absolutely not a path he had previously envisioned.

Having served his curacy in Abingdon, Oxfordshire in the early 1990s, David moved onto the second city, where he taught New Testament Studies at the Queen’s Foundation, Birmingham. In 2001, he headed north to Darlington and served for a decade as Rector of the town’s St Andrew’s Church at Haughton-le-Skerne.

A willingness to travel around the UK, and a passion for exploring theologically significant destinations abroad, have had a huge impact on David’s teaching.

“Moving to Darlington made me tune into the North East and wherever you are based for a job, you must tune into the locality.

“I try to get enriching placement experiences for students training for ministry. Each place has its own character. To help you tell the good news of Jesus, you must learn to understand the people and the place.”

In addition to placement experience, David has embraced opportunities to take students on residential trips to challenging locations.



Imagining being on a boat with Jesus (The Sea of Galilee 2019).

# 13 years at Lindisfarne



Indeed, the Corrymeela peace and reconciliation organisation in Ballycastle has supported trips to Northern Ireland; while Lindisfarne students have also visited Jerusalem, thanks to the Tantur Ecumenical Institute; and even Auschwitz in Germany through the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer.

David added: "It's transforming to go to these places and meet people who are longing for peace. Conflict resolution is a key part of any minister's toolkit - learning from how they deal with these conflicts and bringing that knowledge back."

The college, previously known as Lindisfarne Regional Training Partnership (LRTP), underwent a revamp shortly after David's arrival. It is now widely recognised as the learning centre for both Newcastle and Durham dioceses.



The Revd Dr David Bryan.

He added: "It has been a huge privilege. Joining Lindisfarne when I did was an ideal next step. There was a sense of calling about it - to build on what I had been learning at Haughton-le-Skerne - but I did not expect to become the Principal.

"I tried to raise the spiritual temperature of the place. This is not just about theologies but also about becoming a community of prayer and moral support to foster Lindisfarne as a learning, praying community.

"The buzzword was attentiveness, noting what God might want to do. What is going on? Eyes wide open and ears pinned back."

In the last seven years, Lindisfarne has supported 93 people in becoming either reverends or

licenced lay ministers.

A published author, David is an avid Fan of Liverpool Football Club and enjoys visiting the Peak District with his family.

In terms of his next chapter, he added: "Something that is life giving but I'm not sure what that will look like yet. I will continue to be a passionate supporter of our churches in the two dioceses, and I will still have a strong interest in Scripture, the historical significance of Jesus, the Biblical languages in their Hebrew and Greek texts. Israel and Palestine and what is happening there remains close to my heart."

A farewell service for David will take place at Newcastle Cathedral on 22 June at 11am, led by Bishop Helen-Ann and the Bishop of Jarrow.

David added: "All friends of Lindisfarne are welcome. It is an opportunity to acknowledge the college as a whole and the part Lindisfarne plays in the life of both dioceses."

# What makes us want to give?



**Generous Giving Team – Leanne Conway-Wilcox, Dennis Fancett and Joanne Christie.**

## By Dennis Fancett Giving Ministry Adviser

**H**ave you ever asked yourself what makes me give to my local church? What would make me review how much I give and increase it in line with improved personal circumstances? And do I count myself as what St Paul describes as a ‘cheerful giver’?

Perhaps we’re giving because we feel we must, and deep down feel a little like we are giving begrudgingly - certainly not open to any suggestion of giving more.

If that’s you, the first thing to say is thank you so much for giving, despite your feelings. The value of your gift is deeply appreciated. But actually, grateful as we are, it’s not a good spiritual foundation for giving. For some of us, if we feel we’re giving out of compulsion, as soon as the slightest opportunity comes along that allows us to cut back or stop all together, it’s quite likely we’ll take it!

### *Sowing Generously*

<sup>6</sup>Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup>Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup>And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. <sup>9</sup>As it is written:

“He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.”<sup>a</sup>

### **Bible verse 2 Corinthians 9:7.**

There has to be a better way of reaching the point where we are giving generously and cheerfully. And indeed, there is!

Essentially, we give to what we believe in, to causes dear to our hearts. So the foundation for any review of our giving, or even considering starting to give for the first time, is to reflect on questions such as do I believe in

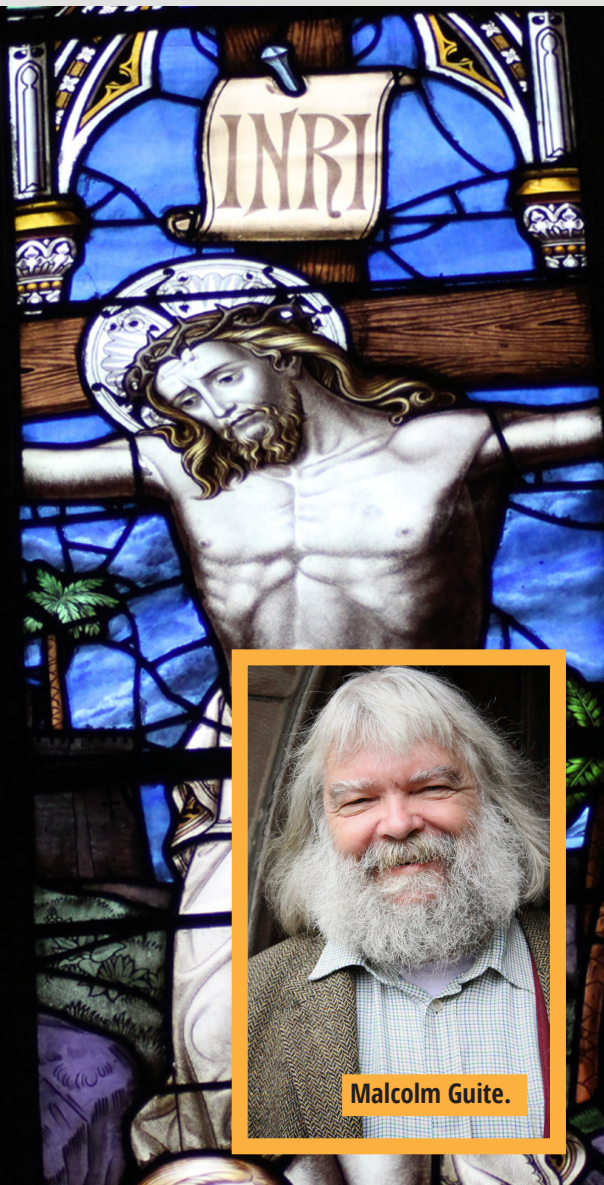
God? Am I a person of faith? Are these things important to me? Do I value my faith above other things I might want to do with my money? Do I understand I am created in the image of a generous God, designed to be generous myself? And do I feel committed to the vision of my local parish church, and the wider ministry of the Diocese?

So, would you be willing to take a few minutes – or maybe hours or perhaps even days – to reflect on those questions? And let that reflection lead us to a point where we are giving as part of our discipleship and faith, from a deep understanding of God’s own generosity to us, and as an expression of commitment to our parish and our diocese. This is the foundation both for healthy church finances and for healthy personal finances too.

And should your church need some help in establishing a better foundation for generous and healthy giving, the Generous Giving team are here to help. Just give us a call on 07467 563 311. We’ll be only too pleased to help.



Tim Boniface.



Malcolm Guite.

## ‘The Eight Words’ – A Jazz Suite with Poetry

Jazz saxophonist and composer the Revd Dr Tim Boniface and his superb rhythm section are to team up with renowned poet the Revd Dr Malcolm Guite for a remarkable evening of jazz and poetry at Newcastle Cathedral.

The unique ticketed event, scheduled for Thursday 2 May at 7.30pm, will unite Malcolm and Tim, the former and current Chaplains of Girton College Cambridge.

Tim’s jazz quartet will play his acclaimed jazz suite, released on CD in 2016, which explores the eight sayings of Jesus in St John’s Passion.

The eight movements, journeying through mystery, strength, despair and living hope, will be interspersed with Malcolm performing some of his deeply moving Passiontide poems. Together, the music and the poetry performed by the two priest-artists who are masters of their crafts offer a fresh way to encounter familiar texts that have inspired artists throughout the centuries.

The Cathedral’s Canon for Outreach and Discipleship, Revd Canon Peter Dobson said: “It is a great joy to be welcoming both Malcolm and Tim to the Cathedral. The pandemic put pay to plans to welcome Malcolm previously, and so it is just brilliant to have him, joining together with Tim, helping us reflect on

the world-changing events of the cross in the last days of the Easter season this year.

“Earlier on the day of the performance, we’re fortunate that Tim and Malcolm will also be joining our monthly ‘Theology & ...’, a partnership between Cathedral and Diocese, as part of Ce Pacitti’s work supporting the resourcing and ongoing formation of ordained and licensed ministers across the Diocese.”

Tickets for ‘The Eight Words’ are available for £20 (general admission) and £17 for concessions through the cathedral’s TicketSource page: [www.ticketsource.co.uk/newcastle-cathedral](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/newcastle-cathedral).

# Living the Lantern



By Jon Canessa,  
Lantern Initiative Lead



The Revd Jon Canessa with the Speaking Up Together group.

**D**uring the Middle Ages, our Lantern Tower functioned like a lighthouse, guiding ships along the River Tyne. Today the Cathedral seeks to continue to shine as a beacon of light for people navigating dark or difficult times.

Since the Lantern Initiative was established in 2020, it has played an increasing role in helping Church and City to respond to the needs of the rough sleeper and street life community, those struggling with problematic drug and alcohol use, poor mental and physical health, prison leavers and those who are seeking asylum.

The Cathedral team meet people where they are by building reciprocal relationships of trust, offering practical solutions to visitors who are often disconnected from support services.

Developing partnerships is key to our approach, working in the gaps and places of

transition with other organisations in order that different initiatives avoid duplicating or cutting across existing provision - but complementing it and adding value instead.

On 29 March, Bishop Helen-Ann's 'Good Friday Meditation' on BBC Radio 4, will reflect on the profound impact of last year's Story Chair. This artwork in our Crypt was a collaboration with Changing Lives, working alongside women who have experienced the criminal justice system.

More recently, in February, the Cathedral hosted a Listening workshop led by a team from Southampton University. This workshop brought together individuals with lived experience from Newcastle with a diverse selection of practitioners and researchers. Similarly, 'The Honest Truth' event held in Café 16 in March, gave a platform to raise greater awareness of, and reduce stigma associated with addiction.

The Lantern Initiative is more than a single

project but a mindset and commitment to a particular approach; it embodies the Cathedral's core values of 'Radical Welcome', 'Inspiring Worship', and 'Empowering Worth'. Café 16 in the Cathedral Refectory shares this ethos, staffed by a team of prison leavers, trained, led and mentored by The Oswin Project, the charity based at HMP Northumberland.

The Cathedral's function, sanctuary and beauty are gifts for everyone across the Diocese to recognise as their own. To highlight this, a short film has recently been created which features interviews with groups the Lantern Initiative works with, including Recovery Church and the Speaking Up Together group for people who experience social isolation as a consequence of their disabilities. It can be viewed online at [newcastlecathedral.org.uk/lantern-initiative](http://newcastlecathedral.org.uk/lantern-initiative).

I hope you enjoy watching it and the light it shines on the daily life of the Cathedral.