

St Mary and St Cuthbert's Church
Chester-le-Street

November

2020



Chester-le-Street Riverside

Dear friends

As I hope you have heard (since I have repeatedly written about it) – we are having significant financial difficulties as a church. Let me give some background to the challenge and opportunity I will present you with.

Our largest commitment financially each year is our Diocesan Parish Share – which is our contribution towards clergy pay and housing. It makes possible the mission and ministry of the whole diocese of Durham. We rightly seek to contribute a lot – as a large parish with a number of clergy (we get paid about £25,000 each).

In 2019 we pledged to the diocese a Parish Share contribution of £105,000 and twelve months ago I wrote in this magazine that we were likely to be about £15,000 short. In response to the information, someone with wonderful generosity came along to the Parish Office with a cheque for that amount and we were able to pay in full last year.

The Church Council pledged £100,000 Share for 2020, but then COVID hit us! We as a parish are significantly affected by it. At present, we have very limited income from hiring of rooms in the Centre, struggling to even cover the costs of running the Café, very little wedding fees income and much lower “loose collections”. We are covering the other costs of the church – but we are way behind on our Share contributions (and our support of charities and missions). As it stands, we probably will pay about £50-60,000 Parish Share by the end of the year.

We are not unique as a parish and the diocese is very conscious that they may not be able to make the clergy appointments that they had planned, because of lower Parish Share contributions this year and next year.

We would like to have one more push this month to give more to Parish Share for 2020. We are to have a **GIFT DAY** on **Saturday 21 November**, when we will encourage people to pray at home (or in the church which will be open between 10.00 am and 12noon). Ask God to provide – so that we can contribute appropriately and responsibly as part of God’s church.

Since March and the COVID lockdown and restrictions – some of us have actually spent a lot less than we normally do. For example, as a couple Christine and I have had holiday refunds, less travel costs and cancelled parties (including my own dad’s 95th birthday gathering). I also appreciate that for others this year has been very hard financially for individuals and households.



Rector's Letter

Cont. from page 2

As we read in famous words from the Old Testament: *“Yours Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.”* 1 Chronicles 29.11-14

Some of us will be able to give £1,000 or more (and I include myself in that category), others over £100, others with smaller sums and still others for whom it would be impossible or inappropriate to give any more than they already do (for a whole host of reasons). Do pray and give as appropriate for your situation.

St Paul encouraged the early church to respond and share their responsibilities for supporting their brothers and sisters with these words: *“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”* 2 Corinthians 9.7

You can give in cash or cheque or by BACS (refer to it as *Gift Day donation*). It can be given before November 21 or after that date.

We will give 10% that is given for the Gift Day to the missions and charities we support and 90% will go to reduce the Parish Share shortfall for 2020

Pray and Give

Yours in Christ

David

Our church bank account details are:

St Mary & St Cuthbert PCC, Chester-le-Street No. 50050083 Sort Code 20-27-41

NORTHUMBRIAN COMMUNITY COMMUNION SERVICE 6.00 pm Sunday 8th November

This service will be shaped by prayers, liturgy, and music written by the Northumbrian Community. This service is open to all as a community, we will celebrate and encounter God with and within us. Spaces can be booked now through the Parish Office.

Reverend Simon Grundy

ANNUAL BEREAVEMENT SERVICE

on Sunday 29th November at 4.00pm & 6.00pm

We will hold two identical Memorial services this year at 4.00 pm and 6.00 pm in church – with COVID restrictions on capacity for the church building, we want to give more space for people to attend. People can book in to reserve a place at one of the services from November 1 via Jan in the Parish Office (by email or telephone).

The services will include the usual reading out of all the names of those whose funerals we conducted from October 2019 to September 2020. Also, there will be the opportunity to light a candle in memory of loved ones.

This year, we are also offering something extra. The grief people have this year is different from normal, because of COVID deaths and the severe restrictions on funerals through the year. We invite people to carefully place a small stone (perhaps painted) on the paving immediately outside of church in a cross shape, in the week before the Bereavement Services from Monday November 23.

We will be sending out a reminder and explanation to all those funeral families.

We will also broadcast the 6.00 pm service on our Church Facebook page for those who would like to engage in that way.

APCM NEWS

Election Results

Church Wardens: Dorothy Hall, David Mallams, Elaine Rayner
and Malcolm Rowland

Deanery Synod Representatives: Anne Curry, Mike Heaps, Ian Goulding,
Alex Nelson and Karen Richardson.

PCC Members: Tom Appleby, June Austin (re-elected), Malcolm Austin,
Anne Brown, Norma Hedley (re-elected), Edna Sanderson and
Alex Webster

ENVELOPES for GIVING

A lot of people have stopped using the envelopes and gone on to the Parish Giving Scheme or a standing order, which is good news. It means greater reliability in our income, less work for us and less physical handling of money.

We do not want to waste money by ordering too many envelopes for 2021.

So, if you have stopped using envelopes please inform Jan in the Parish Office to make sure our records are up to date.

FROM THE OCTOBER REGISTERS

Funerals

September

- 28 Marian Walker (94)
29 Marjorie Hutton (82)

October

- 2 Audrey Lowery (84)
15 Christopher Armstrong (77)
18 Chareen Forster (95)
21 Muriel Heeley (88)
Ronald Smith (80)
22 Gerald Headley Shields (49)
23 June Hall (88)
David Parr (78)
June Banks (88)

Weddings

October

- 10 Elaine Adams &
Nigel John Humes

MOTHERS' UNION

After requests from some members the committee have decided to hold a Mothers' Union service on Monday 2nd November and Monday 7th December at 2.00 pm in church. They will be a short services with music but no singing, a reading, prayers and a short reflection.

We will be following the strict Covid regulations and seats in church will reflect social distancing. They will need to be pre-booked via Sue Begg.

Members are being notified with final arrangements via a notice to be posted to each member.

WORSHIP - when we can't sing

The vicar of St Michael-le-Belfry, York Matthew Porter wrote a Blog about how we can worship as we gather even though we cannot sing. He wrote ...

“Not being able to sing when we gather is hard for us. But it's not impossible. That's why over the last few weeks, as we've met in church masked and in small, socially distanced gatherings, I've kept saying: 'Please don't sing, but please do worship.'

For many, that's a real challenge, because they can no longer sing their heart out and praise God as they desire. But in the same way that lovers find ways to express devotion even when they're separated, so the restrictions of this season stretch us to find fresh opportunities for adoration of our glorious God!

So, let's get really practical. What can we do? How can we worship without singing? Here are ten top tips that I commend to you. They're all good, biblical ways to worship that people have practiced over the centuries. So here we go. Ten ways to worship without singing.

1. Use your mind & heart. Instead of singing the words, in your head register, read and hear the words. Then let them go from your head to your heart, so we end up doing what is advocated in Ephesians 5:19: 'make music in your heart to the Lord.'

2. Use your breath. We can mouth the words, even whispering them very quietly under our breath in our masks. We can let our breath unite with the breath of God's Spirit, and know his presence. If you're able to pray in a God-given prayer language (sometimes known as 'tongues') then quietly pray in this way too. In doing this, we're fulfilling the call of Psalm 150:6: 'let everything that has breath praise the Lord!'

3. Use your legs. When someone we respect enters the room, most people do one of two things with their legs. One is to use them to stand. We stand to honour them, like God's people were urged to do in Nehemiah 9:5. The other is to use them to kneel. We show humility by bowing the knee, like they did in 2 Chronicles 7:3. Of course there is a time and place to sit on our backsides, but most people in Scripture, unless they're old or infirm, get off their posterior to worship. To do so, we need to use our legs.

4. Use your hands. After our mouths, the next most commonly-used tool for communication is our hands. Just watch people talking in public, and you know this is true. That's why it often surprises me that many followers of Jesus fail to use their hands very much in worship. And yet the Bible encourages us to do just this, speaking of 'lifting hands' (Psalm 141:2; 1 Tim. 2:8), 'spreading out hands' (Psalm 143:6) and 'opening hands' (Deut. 15:8) to God. If you've never used your hands in worship in this way, now is surely the time to explore this, lifting the name of Jesus higher and higher.

Cont. on page 7

5. Use your feet. Given that we're meant to keep distanced from people, we can't move around too much when we're gathered for worship at present. But we can keep our feet on the floor and sway. Jewish worshippers often do this, imaging themselves swaying to and fro like a candle flame in the breeze of God's Spirit, and we can do the same. And, of course, we can use our feet to dance. There is much in the Bible on dancing (for example, Psalm 149:3), although very few churches seem to practice it these days. For many years I have felt that the Lord is calling the church in the UK to become more of a dancing church. However, I often get embarrassed dancing, as I know many others do too! I suspect I just have to get over that, and let my feet express praise that in the past I've left to my mouth.

6. Use your fingers. God gave us fingers to aid creativity: for making, building, writing, drawing and for all sorts of crafting. So why not use your fingers creatively in worship in these unusual days? That could mean bringing a notepad and pen, and drawing something, or writing something to express your praise. Or you could use your phone or iPad in a similar way. If you do this, to stay safe, don't pass your creative offerings to others, and make sure you take home what you create.

7. Use your ears. With less distractions from our own voices, and from others around us, we should be all the more aware of the sounds of worship which will mainly come from the front - from those leading. So, let's ensure we're using our ears well for listening: listening to the words, the prayers and the praises, and as we do so let's be attentive to the prophetic voice of the Holy Spirit who wants to 'strengthen, encourage and comfort' us (1 Cor. 14:3).

8. Use your eyes. As well as using your ears to listen, open your eyes to see. Look at the signs and symbols in the building and let them enhance your worship. Most are there for a purpose. So be aware of space and shadows, of colour and candles, of pictures and people. If you're in a building you know well, ask the Lord to help you look beyond the familiar and see things in a fresh way. Use what you see to cause you to be thankful and draw close to God.

9. Use your smile. As well as not singing, we're not meant to have much conversation inside church, and certainly not in groups of more than six. This doesn't mean we stop being church family, but it does mean we will all need to work harder to welcome people, to create community and to show kindness to each other. An obvious way to do this, is simply to smile. Even though you're wearing a mask, make an effort to smile at those around you, and supplement it with a wave. Smile and show those around you that you're pleased they're there! I suspect our smiley greetings will be key worship tools in this season.

10. Use your finances. Finally, as well as giving our thanks, our praise, our prayers and our love to the Lord, we're also called to give him our tithes and offerings (see, e.g. 1 Cor. 16:2).

Cont. on page 8

Cont. from page 7

Giving financially - either by direct debit, or at a contactless giving station - is another important way of worshipping, even though we can't sing. God receives our finances as worship, when we give from a thankful and cheerful heart (2 Cor. 9:7). As we worship with our money, so we can expect the Lord will continue to look after us, so we can give again. Such is his overflowing love (Luke 6:38).

So, there are all sorts of ways we can worship without singing in these extended corona virus days. But to do so we will all need to be courageous and creative. Brave and bold. Prayerful and playful.

If we can learn now to worship together in many of these ten ways and more, then our worship post-corona virus, rather than being frailer, weaker and sicklier, will in fact be much deeper, stronger and healthier. So please don't sing, but do worship.

Living well through the next six months

Living with COVID-19 will be hard for everyone this winter. The Prime Minister has asked us all to observe the Rule of Six. There are lessons and challenges that Christians can draw from this number to help us live well in these times.

- > **SIX MONTHS IS THE NEW HORIZON**
Focus on Easter and lean back into the great themes of the church year.
- > **SIX DAYS TO WORK AND A SABBATH TO REST**
Reclaim the gift of one day each week for rest and re-creation.
- > **SIX PEOPLE TO JOURNEY WITH**
Rediscover church as small groups of people supporting one another.
- > **SIX WAYS TO BE SALT AND LIGHT**
Identify the people and community organisations you can support.
- > **SIX PERCENT TO YOUR CHURCH**
If your income is stable, increase your giving to sustain the local church.
- > **SIX PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR**
Pray for people you know to discover the riches of our faith.

"...neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8.37-39



oxford.anglican.org/six

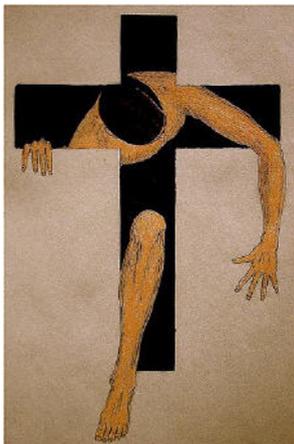
LIVING WELL THROUGH THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

I think this is very helpful. It was written by the Bishop of Oxford - Stephen Croft who was warden of Cranmer Hall, Durham before he became a Bishop about 12 years ago.

The Church of England encourages members to give 5% of their income to their local church (and 5% to other missions/ charities) – hence the reference to increasing giving to 6%. Some of us actually give 10% of our income to our local church.

David

PARISH NORTH THROUGH THE NARROW DOOR AND INTO THE PARISH CENTRE



On Sunday 11 October at 10.00 am something special happened in the Parish Centre. Many of our Parish North congregation met there for the first time in seven months and quickly agreed that this was now the place to gather for worship for the foreseeable future. This will mean that we will meet in the centre with a limited number of seats available. However, when it is absolutely safe to do so we will return to the Chester-le-Street CE School for our Sunday Services.

Being together was a very heart-warming experience. Prior to the service the Pilot Group had met to set up Cuthbert Hall with a full sound system, projector and screen and chairs set up according to those who had booked in for the service, which included people from the whole Parish.

Then as we began to worship, it was good to see how the youngsters had grown in height over the past months and how encouraging it was to hear their stories and news. It was especially good to hear how others in the church had experienced the blessings of support through telephoning one another over the past months.

To comply with church advice, our service on this occasion was shorter than normal, but included those elements we hold dear as we express our love and gratitude to God. The Bible reading, Luke 13. 22-30 (the Narrow Door) was read by Norma Hedley.

It dawned on me that in coming into the Hall we all experienced the unusual entrance of the Narrow Door. It was therefore a privilege to talk about God's narrow door, one fashioned by his love that draws us to the Cross of Christ - the Narrow Door of Salvation. It was also helpful for me to look back on moments when other doors had presented themselves that demanded a spiritual response.

Cont from page 9

Our time of Intercession was led by Ann Wilson and in these moments, we called upon the mighty hand of God to deal with those things that are beyond our control.

We concluded our worship with a song that reminded us of the Mission of God in our world and that like our Parish his work is in the areas of North, South, East and West.

We meet again on Sunday 25 October at 10.00 am. We will come to meet with God, to give to him the offerings of our hearts and be equipped for the days and weeks to come. Our service on 8th November will be a Remembrance service.

Please remember to book your seat(s) for these services.

Rev Mark

Quiet Corner

There was no excitement or emotion in the voice when a BBC News Broadcaster announced “only 11 weeks left to Christmas”, which I found surprising. For some, the mention of the word Christmas can induce panic or despair depending on circumstances and life experiences. For others like myself, it spells excitement and wonderful childhood memories. Not that I received many or expensive gifts, as life in early post war Britain in the 1950’s was still financially tough for the majority of families. What wonderful Christmas times they were and I have to say still are today, when I revert to being a young boy again.

That announcement of the coming of Christmas reminded me that when I turned 70 just a few years ago, I felt that life was getting just a little too short, I made a decision to celebrate all the Christian festivals as they came up in the yearly calendar. Not just the main events of Harvest Festival, Advent, Christmas and Easter, but also the Other lesser celebrations such as the Apostles, Disciples, local Celtic Christian Saints such as Aidan, Bede, Cuthbert and Hild of Whitby to name just a few. Not forgetting All Saints’ Day on 1st November, the periods of Pentecost and Trinity, Michael and All Angels and so on.

What I had really decided was that come what may, I would celebrate the wondrous gift of life and love from our Creator God in Jesus, “whose hands flung stars into space” as the Song says, and also the Holy Spirit who comforts and guides us. Not to celebrate these great Christian periods and people, seems to me at this point in my life, perverse in the extreme and in a way, dishonouring to God. In actual fact, matters have now gone one step further as I’m trying to celebrate not only these festivals, but also each day and every moment of every day. If I’m in celebration mode if not all of the time, then at least most of it, perhaps others, particularly non-Christians who I know might ask what makes me so happy in such desperate and tragic times. That gives me an opportunity to tell them of the who and the why.

Patricia Morgan in her well known song writes:

**” Come on and celebrate,
Celebrate, celebrate and sing,
Celebrate and sing to the King”**

Cont from page 10

The icing on the cake would be if other Christians friends, brothers and sisters, decided to join me in my celebrations. Let's celebrate not only **all** the wonderful Christian periods and people, but particularly **“The Son of God who loves us and gives us life” and who gives us joy nothing else can bring”**.

John Hopper

PILGRIMS PATH



I'm sure many of you have also experienced crossing the Pilgrims' Causeway to Holy Island- the route that monks like St Cuthbert used to take. Doing this recently, it made me think of our pilgrimage with Jesus.

At the start, I took off my boots and socks as I sat on the wall and then stepped out eagerly onto the muddy sand- and promptly slid straight onto my backside! I got up gingerly and tried to follow the path but soon found the going very slippery and had to hold hands with David to keep me upright. We carried on clinging to each other- sometimes one slipped, sometimes the other, but together we helped each other to keep moving.

We were following a line of tall poles but you couldn't tell how many there were. At the beginning you could only see a few but more appeared as we went along. I was glad you couldn't see the size of the task from the start!

At one point there was a horrendous boggy part! Our feet disappeared up to our knees into black

stinking mud! We thought we might get properly stuck but we managed to pull each other out. A real slough of despond- we wondered what possessed us to do it!. But we continued.

At times, it was quite painful underfoot with sharp cockle shells and rough marsh grasses. But it gradually got easier as our destination came into sight and the route became firmer and sandier.

And what great rejoicing when we finally reached our destination!

Christine Tully

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

NOVEMBER 25 - DECEMBER 10



16 Days of Activism against gender based violence is an international campaign, which takes place each year between November 25th and December 10th.

In recent years we have given our support by joining together in Durham City for a walk of prayer to the Cathedral. This campaign is an extension of the day to day grass roots of Mothers' Union, where we work alongside communities to help end gender based violence and to support those affected by it.

With Covid restrictions in place, this will not be possible this year. However, we invite our members and their friends to use the prayer on the right.

Eileen Bishop -

(MU Durham Diocese Faith & Policy leader)

Sue Begg -

(MU Durham Diocese Action & Outreach leader)

We pray for all to follow Christ's example of treating children, women and men with equality and respect.

We pray for all who live in fear of violence and despair that life will ever change. Bring to an end their suffering, restore their sense of worth.

We pray for those who perpetrate abuse with no sense of guilt or shame. Bring to justice their actions, change their inner hearts.

We pray against regimes that endorse violence. Shatter their influence, initiate peace.

Loving Lord,
we pray for a better world where
love, justice and peace may
flourish.
Amen.

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Autumn

Gentle breezes,
Fan rustling leaves,
They begin to furl,
Fading colours,
Gilded by mellow sun.
Autumn brings change,
Green to orange,
Autumn hues,
Soon to give way ,
To icy fingers,
Chilly blast,
Then leaves start to fall at last,
And clothe the paths we tread,
With gold.

K E Brown

© 16.10.20

Parish Centre Coffee Lounge

The Parish Centre Coffee Lounge is
open -

Monday to Friday
10.00 am - 12.30 pm

There is a clear one-way system and most of the tables are in "Mary," with 2 metres social distancing. We are operating waitress/waiter service to the tables. Customers will not go to the hatch. Only one household per table. There is a "welcome" in the foyer to explain the procedures. As required by the Government Test and Trace system you will be required to give your name and contact details to the welcomer.

Until now there has been a limited menu: sandwiches, soup, chips, scones, cake and drinks and revised prices. There is now a more varied selections of meals and one dessert each day which can be eaten in or ordered as a '**take away**'

We hope people will come and feel comfortable, welcomed and safe.

Do come along and enjoy the food, friendship and chat. All are welcome so please spread the word.