

PARISH NEWS



OCTOBER 2020



CHURCH OF THE HOLY SAVIOUR, TYNEMOUTH
www.holysaviours.org.uk



Coronavirus COVID19

PUBLIC COLLECTIVE WORSHIP HAS RESUMED AT HOLY SAVIOURS: A SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION IS HELD EACH SUNDAY AT 1000 AND 1130 – PLEASE WATCH PARISH UPDATES FOR FULL DETAILS.

For the moment, please note the following points:

- churchwardens and sides-people will welcome you into church, ask you to sanitise your hands and sign in [for the purposes of tracing contacts]
- you will be directed to your place in the marked-out pews
- we will be maintaining the 2 metre social distancing policy in church
- the church has been labelled with seating markers and pew numbers to make it easier to see where to sit
- once seated, please remain in your place until you are directed to leave
- after the service you will be directed to leave from the front, through the glass doors on to The Broadway, or from the back through the porch
- you should sanitise your hands on the way out
- the order of service will be on the screen; there will be no service books
- we will not be able to sing, but music will be included in the service
- we cannot offer tea, coffee or toilet facilities at present
- a short video is available on the church website and youtube channel showing what you can expect when we meet for worship
- for those who feel uneasy about gathering indoors in a non family group, services will be recorded and posted on YouTube and the church website
- a small cleaning team will be needed to sanitise the church after each service; if you are willing to help with this, please let Steve Dixon know
- PLEASE KEEP AN EYE ON DAILY NEWS BROADCASTS AND NEWSPAPERS FOR DETAILS OF LOCAL RESTRICTIONS – CURRENTLY THESE ARE LIABLE TO BE CHANGED ALMOST DAILY AS THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO A QUICKLY DEVELOPING AND NATIONALLY VARIABLE SITUATION



THE VICAR WRITES.....

When I bought a new car a few years ago it took me quite a while to get used to some of its automated features. While the automatic windscreen wipers and lights were a great convenience, the 'adaptive cruise control' was initially rather disconcerting. The system tracks the distance to the car in front and matches its speed, accelerating and braking to maintain a safe space between vehicles. Once these are activated, all I have to do is steer the car and keep alert. I was used to being in total control when driving, so it was a very

unnerving experience as I felt the car almost driving itself. Perhaps you feel the same way when you remember that your holiday flight was conducted with little human input. Increased automation and artificial intelligence are beginning to creep into our lives, leading us increasingly to hand over control to machines.

It is natural for us to either want to be in control, or want to know that someone else (we hope with greater skill than ourselves) is in control. We might be wondering, in our current lockdown situation, if anyone is in control. Our Government and Local Authorities are trying to control the coronavirus, but it sometimes feels as though no one succeeding in the attempt, and the situation becomes yet more confusing and chaotic. I find it very wearying to be constantly bombarded with new [often contradictory] regulations and guidelines every few days, which leave us all in a state of flux.

Some, at the extremities of the Christian faith, have been criticised for completely ignoring any Covid restrictions, in the belief that Christians should not be afraid of death. This is based on a theology that God must be in control of our individual and corporate destiny and we need not live in fear. While I find some appeal in the basic premise of this, I also consider it a fatalistic stance which strips us of our individual responsibilities to live our Christianity through care for others.

Our former Archbishop, Rowan Williams, in a recent article in the New Statesman also challenges this belief among some Christians. He suggests that *'religious faith, when it is doing its job ... tells us that we are capable of making a difference, but not all the difference. We can accept that we depend on an agency and a gift beyond what we can clearly understand; and in the light of this we need not be intimidated by any human system of power. We all share a basic dependency. No individual and no regime is invulnerable or in total control. When we understand*

this, we are free both to resist and to accept; to act in hope, and yet not to be trapped in fantasies of individual heroism and power.’¹

I think it is important that we understand our faith in terms of our relationship with God. This is a dependent relationship, but one in which God offers us the Holy Spirit to empower and inspire us to do our bit in his grander scheme. Galatians 5 lists the fruits of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. If we apply any of these fruits of the Spirit to our joint responsibility towards others through our current crisis, I do not feel we could ever cast aside the use of face-masks, hand sanitiser, social distancing, or any other precaution aimed at keeping ourselves and others safe.

We might want to question those who are in authority, and charged with pronouncing guidelines and legislation, and suggest they are not in control of the situation. We might also have a firm hope that God has a wider, mysterious purpose which assures us of divine control. But we know that we can access the wonderful self-control of the Holy Spirit which will help us to make a positive personal contribution to the well-being of others and provide us with some sanity and stability in the chaos of our times.

Steve

EDITORIAL

John Pearce writes: *“Whom say ye that I am” asked Jesus of his disciples. And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”....Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ’.* To the extent that what follows has any scriptural basis, it is in the last sentence of that quotation that my answer to Joan Dotchin’s question begins. Jesus accepts one of the titles – Son of God - by which his disciples had been brought up to recognise the Messiah; he who would restore Jewish rule and bring about the Messianic Age. Why then does he immediately swear them to secrecy on the matter? To me, his action points unmistakably only in one direction; which is to say that his purpose was not to fulfil expectations but to confound them; not to match earthly ambitions but to subvert them, and above all not to resolve the covenant already made with Jewry but to set it aside and renew it altogether. And, as during His temptation in the wilderness, he

¹<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/religion/2020/08/covid-and-confronting-our-own-mortality>

acknowledged that he was able, if he wished, to exercise the powers of a Messiah, but chose, rather, to lead from a position of humility.

Of all the incidents in his life which reveal to me who Jesus is and what he means, it is the story of the Roman soldiers dressing him mockingly as an emperor and doing him sneering homage. They ought to have remembered the old saying that when you point the finger of scorn at someone, the three fingers curled back into the palm of your hand are pointing straight back at you. In jeering at Christ, dressed as he was for powers he neither possessed nor wanted or needed to possess, they were, unknowingly, jeering at the whole notion of the temporal power they served, of political advantage, of kingship, hierarchy and precedence. His robe mocks the ceremonial dress covering the nakedness of all power, his wooden sceptre symbolises the empty paraphernalia of state; and the crown of thorns they placed on his head mocks not only all crowns, chains of office and badges of rank, but also at the offices they adorn, and the people who hold them.

In short, to me Christ was then, and is still, the archetype of an outsider, an exile and a social outcast; his message is revolutionary, rich in paradox, subversive of the *status quo* and derisive of hierarchies. Which is not to say, as the once fashionable liberation theologies suggested, that it is possible to shoehorn Christ into a political manifesto; his message transcends both the gross national product and the grubby compromises of the political process which work towards maximising it. If the Sermon on the Mount is any kind of a manifesto, it speaks to the needs of those who have nothing and expect nothing; it is not an electioneering speech on behalf of the Labour-Liberal-Conservative candidate for a by-election at Damascus Central. If anything, it is entirely dismissive of political processes as we understand them. Blessings abound not for the clubbable, the popular and the ingratiating, but for the rejected, the persecuted and the abused. Our political process will begin to work properly when men and women scheme, intrigue, manipulate and cajole in order to stay *out* of power, rather than to fight their way on to and thence inch upwards on the greasy pole.

Just as Christ upended the money-changers' tables in the temple, he just as surely upends our expectations of a wonderful, mighty prince, even a prince of peace. Even if we read the Gospel accounts of the Incarnation as metaphorical rather than literal, it is obvious that He broke into history not - as we might expect - in a position of power and influence, but as the child of the working-class in the remote outpost of a pagan empire. The first people to do him homage were not - as we might expect - the nobility, the civil establishment, the military hierarchy - but agricultural labourers with no social status even in the bedraggled pecking-order of an occupied country. And the apparently final outcome of his earthly journey was an ignominious and humiliating execution for crimes he did not

commit, the outcome of a plot contrived by the religious leaders of his society and underwritten by a governor whose principle on this occasion appears to have been “peace at any price”, even if the price of peace was to engineer the judicial murder a man who he knew to be innocent.

And, as he lived out his life between that inauspicious birth and that seemingly even more inauspicious death, Christ subverted almost every social norm, convention of ambition and criterion of success, and eschewed every pathway to temporal influence and power. Offered temporal power by the devil [that devil of selfishness and greed who lives in all us of us], he mocked political ambition by pointing out that all earthly kingdoms, without exception and sooner or later, come to mean nothing. Like the small boy in the story of the Emperor’s new clothes [my favourite character in all literature], he affronted and scandalised the religious orthodoxies of the time by cutting through them with his own version of Occam’s Razor, that philosophical principle which says that simplicity leads to truth more often than does complication.

The stories that he told are also challenging to religious orthodoxy and personal belief alike. You picture the synagogue committee, hefting the stones in their hands ready to punish the woman caught in bed with another’s husband, thinking that they have at last devised a trap by which this subversive nuisance will have either to knuckle under to the Mosaic Law or to blaspheme it. What they don’t expect, and cannot gainsay, is the deadly neatness with which Christ skewers their self-righteousness, pointing their vindictiveness towards its proper target, their own self-regard. More than that, in twelve simple words – *let he who is without sin among you cast the first stone* – he raises disquieting questions about law, crime and punishment which resonate [ignored and unanswered] in every letter from *Disgusted of Tonbridge Wells* about bringing back the birch and the rope.

Similarly, Christ never lets us forget that there can be no limits to love, or any end to the efforts we should make to live out that love in action. When the rich young ruler, tithing his income to the church, busying himself with good works, leading a life of exemplary righteousness, asked Christ what more he could do to assure his place among the elect – it was a question to which he thought he already knew the answer. In discerning his preoccupation with wealth and possessions, Christ fashioned for him a challenge – realise your assets and give them away – which spoke precisely to his vulnerability. Of all Christ’s parables, that is the one which sits the least comfortably with rich Christians [like me, let alone you and nearly everyone else reading this] in a world where far too many people have no idea what they might eat tomorrow. If nothing else, it reminds us all that we can never do enough, that there will be always be needs, and that it is our duty to do as much as we can to meet them, and, if necessary, to do so sacrificially. And the fact

that every one of us feels personally challenged by the examples set us by Christ shows us how universal and yet individual is his relationship with humankind.

Finally, though, it is the helplessness and humiliation of the dying Christ that brings him most vividly to life for me. The theological mechanisms of the Atonement which, during two millennia since Calvary, have come to underpin the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension and the coming of the spirit at Pentecost are, I'm afraid, lost on me. Nevertheless, it is in the image of a lamb – the Lamb of God, the helpless, sacrificial lamb of Passover deliverance – that Christ remains a living presence in my life. From his death is re-born the magnificent, essential, over-arching principle of the love that passes all understanding. For many years I felt that I was a kind of fellow-travelling Christian, because I had never journeyed with Paul on the road to Damascus, had never experienced what used to be called a conversion, had never been dazzled into conviction by a moment of blinding revelation. This feeling was intensified the more I read of the epistles of St Paul: as beautifully wrought and powerful as they are, he rarely leaves room for you to think for yourself. Christ, on the other hand, is that true teacher whose lessons demand that you think, whilst enabling and expecting you to think – if, that is, you genuinely wish to learn.

Eventually it came as a comfort to realise that the road to Emmaus could be as sure a route to God as the road to Damascus. It has been on that road, walked at many painful and confused eventides in the company of a wise, listening and all-comprehending Stranger, that I have come to recognise Christ, in the breaking of bread, for who he is: the principle of love, universal and eternal, embodied in God and made flesh in Christ. Perhaps I took the road less travelled by; but all the same it has still made all the difference.

Notes and News

Remembering Bill Graham

Editor's note: I was privileged to attend Bill's funeral on September 23rd as the organist. Like everyone else who was there I was moved and inspired by the loving tributes paid to Bill by Yvonne and Charlotte. I am very grateful to Yvonne for allowing me to reprint below the words she spoke about him.

William Graham – A Eulogy

Thank you for coming here today to celebrate Bill's life. Each of you will have different memories of Bill. He will be remembered as a much-loved husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather. A caring brother, brother-in-law, uncle and great-uncle. An inspiring teacher. A devout Christian. And, last but not least, a

loyal and supportive friend. Is there a golden thread with which to bind together all these memories? I think there is.

In my hand I am holding a silver bookmark given to Bill many years ago by a dear friend and colleague. On one side is engraved his name; on the other four simple words – *An Investor in People*.

Bill wasn't interested in monetary investment but he was very interested in people. Throughout his life, much of his time, many talents, boundless energy and enthusiasm was spent helping others achieve that which they wanted to achieve, to be what they wanted to be. *William D B Graham: An Investor in People*. I can't think of a better epitaph.



Editor's note: I am also grateful to Yvonne for the loan of this characteristic photograph of Bill, taken whilst he was enjoying lunch at a Left Bank brasserie in Paris. Bill was a countryman at heart, but always said that if he had to live in a city he would choose to live in Paris. For myself it brings back warm memories of Sunday morning coffee-times, when we would often giggle over the latest daftnesses perpetrated in the worlds of politics, education and the church; he had a strong – but charitable – sense of the absurd. May he sleep sweetly at rest.

This month's cover: This organist's-eye view of our organ console is from a photograph by Malcolm Soulsby to be found on the Facebook *Holy Saviour's Music* page. It shows just why it is that good organists need to develop such dexterity as they go about their work. To control three five-octave manuals [from the top down the *Swell*, the *Great* and the *Choir*] and a three-octave pedal keyboard, you need to be able to operate forty-six stops [the white oblong levers in the row above the upper manual]. Many of the stops are also grouped by thirty combination pistons [the white buttons on the wooden strip beneath each manual], some of which are duplicated as foot pistons above the pedal board. There are also two foot-pedals which control the volume of the *Swell* and *Choir* manuals by opening and closing the shutters that enclose their pipes. All of which goes to show that when organists are at full stretch, eyes reading the bar after the one they are playing, ears alert to balance and volume, both hands and both feet in frantic action, it is not wise to go up and start a conversation with them. All of which reminds me.....

The Malcolm Soulsby Tune A Day Challenge

John Pearce writes: This article is being written on Monday, September 14th. On September 14th in 1741, Handel completed his oratorio *Messiah* [it took him only twenty-four days], Clayton Moore [the actor who played *The Lone Ranger* on television] was born in 1914, and the Duke of Wellington [victor of Waterloo and Prime Minister] died in 1852. Isn't that interesting?

More to the point for us at Holy Saviour's, Monday September 14th 2020 was day 92 of Malcolm Soulsby's **365 Challenge**, begun on June 15th, the day he was allowed back in to church and able to play the organ for the first time since March 20th. On that day he played and recorded J S Bach's Chorale Prelude *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ* [I call on you, Lord Jesus Christ]. From this beginning, a self-set challenge to play and record **A Tune a Day**, three hundred and sixty five pieces across a whole year, turned into a fund-raising scheme for our church. Writing on the **Holy Saviour's Music Facebook** page on August 3rd, Malcolm said:

I like challenges. To put the pieces I upload each day to good use I am setting up a sponsorship scheme for Church funds. Social events for fundraising at Holy Saviour's have not been possible for some time, I wondered if there was something I could do different to a 24 hour hymn-playing marathon. I propose to post a different piece of organ music for 365 days on this page and my YouTube page 'Malcolm's 365 Challenge' on which I have uploaded 15 pieces so far. The start date was the piece I uploaded on this page on 15th June. Requests will be accommodated if possible for an extra fee to Church Funds, subject of course to

the following conditions; [a] I can play it to a reasonable standard and [b] I have or can obtain the music and manage the page turns (social distancing means that for the moment I can't use a page turner).



As well as posting the recordings daily on the Holy Saviour's Facebook page. Malcolm is also posting the recordings on his YouTube page, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvWEezUKFSJ4Xju9Lze0G5w> - *Malcolm's 365 Challenge*. These recordings are appearing a few weeks in arrears of the Facebook postings. If you would like to sponsor Malcolm for a performance, then please contact him at malsoulsby63@hotmail.co.uk or use his mobile phone number 07903 374722 to get in touch. You can sponsor him simply by naming a day on which you would like to have a piece played in your name, or you can also request pieces for a specific day for a special dedicatee – pay whatever amount you wish. [For an example of such an occasion, see September 12th 2020.]

For example, I spent a very happy afternoon one day last week choosing eight pieces for Malcolm to play respectively on November 9th and December 20th this year, and February 14th, March 3rd, March 18th, March 24th, April 24th and April 30th 2021. These dates are all birthdays connected with my family – Dad, daughter Jenny, me, Mam, the late Gillian Harrison, daughter Katie, Helen, and Christopher. To find out what pieces I have chosen to celebrate them, you will have to tune in on the appropriate date, but as a small appetiser, google *Dennis Brain, Le Basque, Marin Marais* and play the resulting YouTube clip. This is the piece I have chosen for Helen; like her it is short, charming, energetic, and never fails to make me smile. [By the way if you do listen to this tune, then beware – it's a complete earworm, and you will be humming it all day.] If you are not sure if the music you

want exists as an organ piece, then please ask Malcolm anyway; I have said to him that I will be happy to arrange for the organ any pieces for which he doesn't have or cannot obtain music. My Dennis Brain tune, for example, is for French horn and piano, but I have arranged it for Malcolm to play so that Helen doesn't miss out.

If you do sponsor Malcolm, then please pay your sponsor money into the church bank account. The easiest way to do it is to make a BACS payment using the reference **365 Challenge** into the Holy Saviour's bank account – sort code **55 81 19**, account number **08010323**, or give a cheque made out to Holy Saviours Church [crossed 365 Challenge] to Karen Bilton or Stuart Crozier – but please not to Malcolm himself.

I hope that Malcolm's enterprise, dedication and musicianship will get the support from us all that he deserves. For me, as for many of us, his organ-playing and cheerful presence among us have become, in the last three years, an essential part of our church fabric. On his Facebook page I came across this striking and memorable quotation from the Bishop of St Albans: ***Music in worship is not an optional extra; it expresses the height and depth of human experience and exposes the piercing beauty of God in ways that words never can.***

Part of our luck as a congregation at Holy Saviours is to have a church musician who not only believes that to be true, but who also works untiringly to put that belief into practice. I make it that Malcolm still has about 235 days in his 365 Tune a Day Challenge still left to fill – plenty of room, then for everyone: over to you.

Correspondence

From the Graham family: Yvonne, Charlotte, Andrew, James and Oliver would like to thank all members of the church community for their generous support following Bill's death. It was much appreciated.

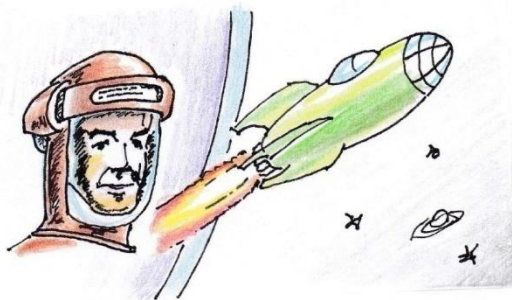
Sincerely, Yvonne Graham.

Revd Stephen Huxley, from his retirement in Perthshire, sends his best wishes to all at Holy Saviour's. When we printed the September edition [the first one to be published in print since March], I enclosed a letter of greeting to all our postal subscribers with their copies. It was an absolute delight a few days later to get a telephone call from Stephen, sounding as vigorous and cheerful as ever. We swapped family gossip and reminiscence, and he warmed my heart with his sign-off: "I do enjoy getting the magazine, John, and although I don't always agree with everything you write, you always make me think, and that's never a bad thing". In times like these we need to be grateful for small mercies. These kind words from the man who led me into being confirmed in 1973 made my day. Thanks, Stephen.

Editor's note: When I found the following email in my inbox, I was not at first sure what to make of it. I had never heard of the Revd John King, although I can confirm that he runs a blog which you can find at <https://timstking.wixsite.com/> and this is well worth a visit. However all that may be, since he said some nice things about the *Parish News*, and since many of our readers will, like me, remember Dan Dare [not to mention the monstrously evil Mekon, a sort of green-faced Dominic Cummings], I print it without further comment. The illustration is, I think, Revd King's own work.

DO YOU REMEMBER DAN DARE?

If there were a prize for the most unpredictable parish magazine editor in the country, a foremost candidate would surely be John Pearce. He edits the parish magazine at Holy Saviour's parish church, Tynemouth. The workmanlike cover of the 28-page magazine gives no hint of the explosive content. He upsets the apple-cart and disturbs sacred cows.



The September issue carries a number of contributions from readers on one contentious issue after another. Several pages are taken up with arguments for and against removing pews. They provide a resting-place for all the booklets and pieces of paper a worshipper collects, says one. Another says that chairs make a scraping noise when they are moved. There are, of course, arguments of a weightier kind. But where should we be if we never had our tongues in our cheeks?

All in all, the magazine edited by John Pearce is a good riposte to anybody who looks on parish magazines as I believe Dick Sheppard did. He tore up every parish magazine he came across before it did any more harm. For the benefit of those readers who cannot remember the General Strike of 1926 and the Munich crisis of 1938 Dick Sheppard was a Dean of Canterbury, a foremost pacifist and a notable spokesman for Christianity (but not the institutional Church) in the early days of

the BBC. Like Marcus Morris, who edited *The Eagle*, a children's weekly, two or three decades later, he gained a popular hearing.

Marcus Morris deserves to be the hero of every parish magazine editor. He started his journalistic career as editor of *Anvil*, a parish magazine in Birkdale, where he was vicar, and collected household names as contributors. Against all the odds he went on to gain a huge circulation for *Eagle*, with Dan Dare and cutaway illustrations as starring features. Just as it is possible to meet pensioners nowadays who fondly remember Richmal Crompton's *Just William*, so it is possible to meet those who preserve treasured issues of the 'Eagle' they grew up with.

Marcus Morris's old parish in Birkdale, St James's, nowadays has a magazine it shares with St Peter's parish; the editor is Judith Rimmer. It runs to 40 pages and has wide-ranging interests, not quite as wide-ranging, perhaps, as its illustrious predecessor, but a genius [if that's not too strong a word] like Marcus Morris does not come along all that often. Go for it, Judith.

If you have a comment on this post please send an email to Revd John King at johnc.king@talktalk.net.

Editor's note: *As this goes to press I haven't had time to reply to Revd King or follow up his reference to my fellow editor Judith Rimmer. Before the November edition of the Parish News I intend to do both and we shall see what we shall see. In the meantime, I would be lying if I said that I wasn't pleased by Revd King's words, even if upsetting apple carts and frightening sacred cows are not the only things I set out to do.*

BIBLICAL WORDS [V]:

'My presence will go with you and I will give you rest'

Clive Harper writes Years ago, I looked after seven little churches in the Hereford Diocese; lots of hills I can remember (hard work on the bicycle) and lots of services.

When I was feeling a bit tired or fed up I would cycle to Thornbury Church, dedicated to St Anna [the mother of the Virgin Mary] and I would go in, because it was always unlocked, and I would sit quietly and look at the stained glass window at the east end; it is a beautiful window and it has written on it the inscription: *my presence will go with thee and I will give thee rest*; [the *thee's* and *thou's* were because it was a Victorian window]. It was a continuing source of refreshment and inspiration and I always cycled away feeling much refreshed.

Go back a few thousand years and we find Moses leading the children of Israel across the wilderness towards the Promised Land; and from time to time he too

was tired and fed up, with much more reason than me, and much more responsibility; after all, without him the world would be a different place and God would have needed to find someone else to lead His people and to do the ground work for the Incarnation.

But at the time Moses was in need of some reassurance and he was having a heart to heart with God; Look, he said, you have told me to lead this people but you haven't told me who will go with me; and God said: *my presence will go with you and I will give you rest* [Exodus 33 v 14]; of course, he did not speak in English, probably Hebrew or Egyptian but Moses understood all right; and through the long journey across the Wilderness Moses knew God's presence and His peace.

Forward a thousand years or so and we come to Jesus; and what does He say; *if you are tired or just fed up, come to me and I will give you rest* [Matthew 11 v 28]; echoes of the words spoken to Moses; shared by a Rector in a country church; and available to all who need help in time of need.

A NUDGE

Revd Malcolm Railton writes: Since 1984, the Church of England has developed and adopted an understanding of what contemporary mission is about. The resulting five points or aims, have become known as the *Five Marks of Mission* and the fifth one states, *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.*

This week, I had the pain and pleasure of watching Sir David Attenborough's new film, *A Life On Our Planet* in which he explains and illustrates what we have done to God's creation, and what we must do to repair the damage while we still can. The damage that has been done to God's creation is huge, far worse than I had realised, but Sir David manages to maintain his cheery optimism and belief that if the whole world works together all is not lost.

For a man of 94 he remains extremely sharp, dedicated, and astute, full of passion, wisdom, and enthusiasm and is a great example to us all. The future of the human race may well depend on what we do now and I firmly believe that we must do everything that we can *to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.* We must put aside doubts and ridiculous arguments, such as the outright denial of this problem by an American President, and move forward together. If we do not do this for our own sake, then we must do it for the sake of our children and grandchildren who will ultimately pay the price for our stupidity.

We must also consider the plight of God's children in poorer countries. The poor and the vulnerable always suffer disproportionately and it is our duty, and should

be our joy, as Christians, to love our neighbour, whoever or wherever they are. By safeguarding the future of the planet we would also be working towards the third Mark of Mission, which is *to respond to human need by loving service*.

David Attenborough's film is on at cinemas now and I believe is available on Netflix in the near future. I found it to be frightening, annoying and depressing, but ultimately uplifting and inspiring. It is definitely worth watching.

Curiously, this week I am also reading a book, *English Pastoral* by James Rebanks, a hill farmer in the Lake District. Although approaching the problem of the sustainability of the earth from a completely different angle, his conclusions are largely the same. The book is beautifully written and enjoyable as well as educational and I highly recommend it.

Is it just coincidence that I have received this message twice this week from different sources, or is the Good Lord is giving me a nudge?

And finally, a reprint by permission of *Ship of Fools*, the online magazine of Christian Unrest. The *Ship of Fools* editor requires me to publish the following by way of introduction:

The Mystery Worshipper, which produced this article, is run by shipoffools.com, the online magazine of Christian unrest. Mystery Worshippers are volunteers who visit churches of all denominations worldwide, leaving a calling card in the collection plate and posting a first-timer's impression of services on Ship of Fools. For further reports, visit the Mystery Worshipper at: shipoffools.com.

The Mystery what? The Mystery Worshipper is a *Ship of Fools* project that we launched in 1998. That's when we started to send out volunteers to take part in church services worldwide, from Singapore to San Francisco, from Brisbane to Bombay, to file a first-timer's impression of how it was to be in church that day. The Mystery Worshipper arrives at the average local church incognito, looking just like an ordinary visitor. They join in wholeheartedly with the singing and worship. They listen thoughtfully to the sermon. They attempt to mingle with people during the after-service cup of tea. And then they go away and write a witty and thoughtful report on the whole experience.

There are just a few simple rules, the most important of which is that they have to visit a church where they are not known. As the book of Hebrews says: *'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.'*

The Mystery Worshipper comes like a thief in the *Nunc Dimittis*, and then tells our readers what it was like to actually be there, in that church, on that particular

Sunday. They answer the questions that go to the heart of church life. Such as *How long was the sermon? How hard was the pew? How warm was the welcome? How cold was the coffee? How much was it like heaven? How much was it like... er... the other place? What did you remember about the service the next day?*

Every Mystery Worshipper comes equipped with the Mystery Worshipper calling card, which they drop into the offertory plate during the collection. The message is simple: *'You have been blessed by a visit from the Mystery Worshipper. Read about your church soon on shipoffools.com.'*

Obviously, the spirit of the project is rather mischievous. Sending sacred spies into the back pews of churches isn't something that has been done on this scale before. But the Mystery Worshipper isn't only an entertainment, as it also has some theological objectives. We want to show people who are on the edges of faith what church is like today. The project turns church inside out to show people what happens inside these weird and scary-looking buildings they see in the street. The reports say: *This is what worship, preaching, and Christian communities look like today.*

We're also very committed to valuing and celebrating the many traditions and expressions of the Christian faith around the world. The Mystery Worshipper is a genuinely ecumenical project, helping Christians appreciate different ways of celebrating their faith.

Finally, we want to help churches get better at what they do. The Mystery Worshipper holds up a mirror to local churches and says, *'This is what you looked like on this particular Sunday, in the eyes of a stranger who just walked in off the street. Did you expect to look like this? Are you happy?'* We think critical reflection is very important for churches, and happily, there are churches which have taken their report on church weekends and discussed how they can do things better.

Over the years, several hundred people have signed up to become Mystery Worshipers, and we've published over 3,000 reports. Although the project has a humorous feel, we ask our volunteers to make a significant commitment in time and energy to produce their reports, and we're indebted to them for what they do. For our part, we spend significant time in editing reports, fact-checking, and publishing online.

One of our reporters put into words why so many people have signed up for the project: *'For me, your Mystery Worshipper campaign is a brilliantly positive way to find out exactly what is wrong with the church and put it right. And I would like to be a part of that. I want to be inspired again. And it seems like getting involved in something like this – instead of just staying at home and bellyaching – is exactly the right thing to do.'*

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As this edition of the Parish News goes to the press, [September 30th] we are currently celebrating Holy Communion in its amended format each Sunday. That said, the recent resurgence of the COVID-19 epidemic may well have consequences which at the moment we cannot foresee. Please keep an eye on the church website, the emails from Steve Dixon, and news in local media. The 1000 service will be repeated at 1130 if necessary, so that we can manage our numbers in view of the need to maintain social distancing for the time being. Attendance will be "first come, first served", so if you cannot be admitted at 1000, you will be admitted at 1130. Each service will last 40 minutes, with the interval between them being given over to cleaning the church in time for the second service. Parishioners who do not feel ready to join a large gathering for the moment will be able to join in the YouTube transmission on the church website at www.holysaviours.org.uk. It is currently intended that these transmissions will continue indefinitely.

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07729 393 580
0191 697 4562

Curate
Email
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Revd. Malcolm Raiton
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Janice Torpy
 Tel: 07920 049 341

David Bilton,
 19 Ashleigh Grove
 Tel. 2580270

PCC Vice Chairman:
 Chris Benneworth

PCC Treasurer:
 Karen Bilton, 19 Ashleigh Grove
 Tel. 2580270

Church Flowers:
 Sheila Park, 15 Ashleigh Grove,
 Tel. 257 5481
 Barbara Walker, 2 Monkstone Crescent,
 Tel. 257 4159

Activities

Mothers' Union

1st Monday 2.00pm Parish Centre
 3rd Thursday 2.00pm Parish Centre
 Cathy Duff Tel 0191 257 4811

W3 – Women's Group

1st Wednesday 7.30pm Parish Centre
 Debbie Baird Tel. 296 1663

Rainbows

Lucy Skillen Tel. 07891101262

Brownies

Pat Corbett Tel. 0191 2800510

Guides

Grace Paul Tel. 07803371929

Rangers

Grace Paul Tel. 07803 371929

Beavers

Gillian Smith Tel. 296 1426
tynemouthbeavers@gmail.com

Cub Scouts

Fiona Lydall Tel 257 3047

Scouts

David Littlefield Tel. 257 8740

Explorer Scouts

Lucy Mace Tel. 258 5948

Group Scout Leader

Michael Dyer Tel. 2596236

Asst. Group Leader

David Littlefield Tel. 257 8740

Scout Hut bookings:

Helen Preston Tel: 257 0574

Tynemouth Village Day Centre – Parish Hall

Tel. 259 5569

Mother & Toddler Group – Parish Hall

Friday 9.30am

ARTICLES FOR THE PARISH NEWS

These should be submitted to the editor, **John Pearce**, at JCPrintmail@gmx.co.uk– the deadline will be published each month. Post written contributions in the Parish News Mailbox outside the Parish Office or to 9 Selwyn Avenue, Monkseaton, NE25 9DH.

All queries to

0191 291 2742 or 07903 227 192.