

PARISH NEWS



NOVEMBER 2020

THE DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE



Ordination of Priests

by

**The Rt Rev'd Christine Hardman
Bishop of Newcastle**

Rev'd Benjamin Jarvis

to serve in the benefice of
St Mary, Monkseaton

Rev'd Malcolm Railton

to serve in the benefice of
Tynemouth Priory

**Church of St Mary, Monkseaton
10th October, 2020 at 3.00 pm**

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY SAVIOUR,
TYNEMOUTH**



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.....

We are coming round to what would have been one of the largest gatherings of the Tynemouth community; the Remembrance Parade and Service on the village green. The last few years have seen the numbers attending the service grow, but this year we are unable to hold the event. We will have to find other ways to pay our respects to those who died to defend our country and in the cause of peace and freedom. We will include an Act of Remembrance in Sunday services on 8 November. I would also suggest that we use our

living room windows to display poppies and other symbols of Remembrance. The Royal British Legion is advocating we take part in remote and socially distanced Remembrance activity, whether that be watching the service on television or pausing for the Two Minute Silence in our homes or on our doorsteps.

Remembrance is a key part of our tradition and theology. There is much in the Old Testament about remembrance of past events and how they relate to the present. Many Psalms remember the journey of the Israelites through the desert in the time of the exodus and how God provided for them, yet they were unfaithful to God and put him to the test. They are a reminder not to repeat the mistakes of the past. Other Psalms ring out with the memories of times when God has saved and blessed his people.

Stephen's speech (Acts 7) to the Jewish religious leaders contains a potted history of the Jewish patriarchs and their faithfulness to God. He built on this remembrance to liken the current leaders of the Sanhedrin – who were trying him for blaspheming Moses and God – to those who murdered the prophets, since it was they who had cried out for Jesus' crucifixion.

In our Acts of Remembrance, we look back at past conflicts with a certain amount of pride in the bravery of those who fought and in awe at the selfless sacrifices made. But it would be wrong to ignore the bigger picture of these worldwide catastrophes. They were a low point in human history. It is so important for us to remember the past both for its joys and for the mistakes made by those who went before us.

Today, we owe it to those who sacrificed their health or even their lives by working our hardest to build community, from the very local to the international. This is more necessary now than ever as we face the global pandemic. Humanity is united in the suffering caused by Covid-19. And it will be through a united international effort that humanity can begin to hope for an end to this scourge.

Though it may not be a man-made catastrophe which grips us now, we can still remember the lessons from the past and look to our calling to be a people of peace and those whom God chooses to proclaim his kingdom.

Steve

EDITORIAL

John Pearce writes: For reasons that matter to me only, I spent an afternoon last week reading the works of St Teresa of Avila. Many of us know one of her more famous admonitions, charging us with our duty to serve the priesthood to which all believers belong: *Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks in compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.* I have often used versions of this homily to introduce Intercessions. But more to my comfort at this time were these words: *Trust God that you are where you are meant to be: let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you. All things are passing away: God never changes. Patience obtains all things: whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices.* It is a truism that everyone is finding life hard going at the moment - although, as the late Maurice Chevalier nearly said, no matter how bad life gets, it generally remains better than the alternative. But in these troublous times, these words, written by a Spanish noblewoman turned holy nun nearly five hundred years ago, seemed to me to speak exactly to my condition, as the Quakers say.

Trust God that you are where you are meant to be: because we live in a society needfully set about with law and regulation, organisation and structure, it is easy to feel that the patterns we fit into are entirely mundane and practical. Spiritually, the pattern of which we form a part is so enormous in scope that it is impossible to understand. I remember, a couple of years ago, sitting alone on a hillside on the island of Iona under an enormous, cloudless night sky, watching the huge wheeling constellations and feeling, for a while, utterly at peace with where I was and who I am - something which happens to me only very rarely. Whatever uncertainties and trepidations have visited me since and will no doubt visit me again, I return to that treasured moment often, and to the knowledge that, vast and incomprehensible as the cosmos is, I have a place - and my right place - in it.

Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you: easier thought and said than done, you may feel, particularly at the moment. But the other evening, in a family

Zoom with Jenny and Katie, we got to discussing how the events of the last seven months have altered our outlook on life, and one surprising concord emerged; this was that we are all now rather better than we were at living a day at a time, and worrying rather less about what may happen next week. This in part reflects some degree of fatalism, I suppose - it is pointless to worry about what you cannot affect. But the change lies in working through that point to the realisation that there is no need to fear what you cannot affect either.

All things are passing away: God never changes. Last March, at the beginning of the pandemic, I wrote in a *Parish News* editorial how its onslaught on society had taught us the difference between knowing something and understanding what it means. “*We know, in theory, that anything can go wrong at any moment, but this knowledge does not prevent the actuality of its happening from being a terrifying shock when it does happen. If nothing else, Covid 19 has been the crudest of rude awakenings to the harshest of harsh reality.*” There is little need to recall here the seismic and awful changes now inflicted on our world, and even less to speculate about which changes may be permanent and which may be reversible. Vladimir Lenin, who preached the doctrine of permanent and continual revolution in society, could have had no idea that his notions would be effected by, of all things, a virus. For me, the idea that God can bring stability and order to a world of flux and chaos was brought home very powerfully as I watched Malcolm Railton and Ben Jarvis being ordained on the internet broadcast from St Mary’s Monkseaton. Like the words of St Teresa, the liturgy of the ordination is over five hundred years old; and the significance of the laying on of hands four times older still – and on this occasion, they combined to point to the future of our faith in the hands of Malcolm and Ben. At the time I did not understand why I spent so much of the service with tears in my eyes, but now I do: the changes Covid-19 has wrought in our world have not affected – and cannot affect – what Graham Greene called “the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God”: God never changes.

Patience obtains all things: it is now nearly three years since I watched a television news bulletin or listened on Radio Four to *Today* or *The World at One* or *PM* or *The World Tonight*. Some of this is simple world-weariness on my part, perhaps best summed up in Karl Marx’s dictum that historical entities appear twice, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. I have witnessed my fair share of tragedy, and seen a great deal of that tragedy recycled as farce; that is only to be expected at my age. What I can’t stand any more is the endless impatience of news broadcasters, which inflates five minutes of fact into an hour of speculation, “expert” opinion, commentary, interviews with peripheral figures and pure waffle – and does so day after day after day. By the time this is read, we may have some idea of whether the American nation have repeated the

inexplicable decision they made in 2016 when they elected Donald Trump as President. But [and this is my point] **the election will happen anyway** – whether or not the news media report every nuance, real and imaginary, of the whole process. It is this fever of anticipation, this pointlessly avid, rabid desire to live in the middle of next week, which prevents us from seeing today whole and living it more abundantly. And this to me is the key idea behind St Teresa's words: if you live, content, where God places you, if you fear nothing because you expect nothing, if you are grounded surely in God's love, then the capacity for patience will accrue to you; and what a blessing it is.

Whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices: because I believe that everyone's concept of God is personal to them and to their God, I can only illustrate this last admonition from personal experience. The theologian Karl Barth said that *"It may be that when the angels go about their task in heaven of praising God, they play and sing only the music of Bach. I am sure, however, when they play for their own pleasure, that they play only Mozart."* Music, in other words, is, like belief, one function of spirituality; the writer Victor Hugo said that music speaks of that which we cannot put into words, but about which we cannot remain silent. The notion that in Mozart's *String Quintet in G minor*, and the *Sinfonia Concertante for violin and viola* we can hear the authentic voice of God may well be blasphemous to some. But for me this music is profoundly prayerful and will remain so for so long as I have ears to hear. This is a purely personal feeling; others may hear or see the word of God in action in painting, sculpture, poetry, nature [or even, for all I know, in a perfectly executed square-cut]. This matters a great deal less than the fact that once we experience it and bind it to ourselves, we will never again need anything else to sustain us: God alone suffices.

Notes and News

Sheila Park writes: Two weeks after the church re-opened in July, the flower arrangers started doing the flowers again. I think it was a good idea to decorate the church again, especially as many of the other church adornments had had to be put away.

We have had many kind comments from people attending the services on how lovely the flowers are. Now people are worshipping seated at a distance, they have time and space to really look and focus on the arrangements.

We will be doing some flowers at Christmas and if anyone would like to donate to the cost please put the money in an envelope marked "Flowers" and leave it in the collection plate. If you prefer, put it through my door or pass it to the Wardens. This money will also go towards the cost of the flowers in church during 2021.

There will be a new Flower List for 2021 on the notice board at the end of the year so that people can contribute to the cost of the altar flowers on any specific date.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Bill Graham, who died so suddenly and unexpectedly in September. Bill was our only male flower arranger and had, since his retirement, enjoying helping us out especially at Easter, Harvest and Christmas. All those large, sometimes flamboyant arrangements you saw adorning the top of the font were done, and paid for by Bill – and they were often topped off with a balloon floating over them. He was very artistic, loved colour, and created some spectacular and thoughtful arrangements over the years.

Whenever Bill was there, there was always smiling and humour. Thank you, Bill, for all your hard work but mostly for the laughter you created – no bad thing to have laughter in church.

Happy Birthday to Bill! David Littlefield writes: Belated but sincere congratulations to Bill Mills who celebrated his 100th Birthday on October 31st. Bill was very active in Parish life at Holy Saviours having been a committed Lay Reader for many years. He also contributed to many other Church activities as well being a Scout Master for our Scout Group.

Bill retired some years ago to Norham on Tweed but enjoys our magazine and any contact with old Tynemouth friends. His address is 1 Tower Cottages, Norham, Berwick upon Tweed TD5 2LJ. Bill welcomes any news! I am most grateful to Steve for so readily congratulating Bill on behalf of the Parish.

Editor's note: Thanks to David for his enterprise in letting so many of us know in advance of Bill's hundredth birthday so that we could ensure that he received a suitable number of greetings to mark the occasion. Out of curiosity I looked up October 31st, 1920 in Wikipedia to find that Bill shares a birthday with Dick Francis, jockey and crime novelist. It was also the day on which Dr Frederick Banting first worked out how to synthesise the hormone insulin, a discovery which led to millions of diabetics being able to live more freely with a condition which had previously constrained their lives cruelly. Bill was born when David Lloyd-George was still Prime Minister, and some notable firsts also occurred in that year. Women were allowed to sit on juries and take degrees at Oxford University for the first time, the first Road Fund tax was introduced, at a cost of £1.00 per horsepower; the total population of the British Empire reached its highest total ever: 423 million; and dear Bill was only one of the record number of 1.1 million babies born that year. Whatever his mum fed him on, it seems to have worked.

This month's cover: Malcolm Railton's ordination was only the second one I have ever attended as a kind of participant. At the first one, that of my dear friend Revd. Emma Duff, we had, so to speak, the full menu: a huge congregation in the massive nave of the cathedral, teeming hordes of clergy wherever you looked, and ceremonial which made you feel the full weight and import of what was happening. Three weeks ago, Malcolm's priesting was a spare, socially-distanced affair, with perhaps twenty people in attendance in the light and airy space of one of my favourite churches at the coast, St Mary's Monkseaton. Even sitting watching in my study, a cup of tea at hand and the man next door pressure-hosing his Range Rover at full blast, I felt as much a part of the occasion as if I had been there; its small scale and intimacy knocked at the heart quite unexpectedly. May God bless Malcolm and Ben in their ministry, which they join at a hard moment: on the journey they take with them our love and prayers. And speaking of travel...

A journey

Revd Malcolm Railton writes: In last month's magazine I mentioned having been nudged twice in order to make me think and maybe even do something. Well, it has happened again. I had a request from our editor John asking me to write a short article about my journey thus far, and within days of that, during preparation for a funeral service, the Bible reading chosen by the family was Psalm 121, which is largely about journeying in many ways; not only about physical journeys, but also our journey through life and towards God.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

This psalm is about trusting in God's care; it is also a travel Psalm and may have been intended to be said or sung on a pilgrimage, perhaps to Jerusalem. Apparently, in the past, many families would have read this Psalm aloud before going on a journey. Devout Jews still sometimes recite verses 5 and 8 of this psalm – *The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand, The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for*

evermore when entering or leaving their homes and when touching the Mezuzah on the door frame. It is relevant not only for our physical journeys but also for our life journey itself.

My own journey, up to becoming a priest at Holy Saviours Tynemouth, has taken so many twists and turns over the years that I have often not been able to see a clear or intended path. It is now apparent to me, with the benefit of hindsight, that there always was a plan, a map for my journey, however unsighted or reluctant I may have been.

In March next year it will be ten years since I retired from the police service and even then I had not acknowledged what was to become my vocation. As I look back now I can certainly see that for about the last twenty five years I have been making my way here. When I finally plucked up the courage to admit it to myself and to speak to my vicar, he responded by saying, *“at last, I thought you would never get round to it”*. I can now see that he was right to leave me to come round in my own time and wait for God to do his work.

I do not know where my journey may take me in the future but I do anticipate being with you in Tynemouth for a year or two. After that, who knows, but I am confident that, as it says in that last verse, we are left with the wonderful promise that the Lord will watch over our going out and our coming in, now and forevermore. All we have to do is trust in Him.

Remembrance Services to be held online for North Tyneside



The following press-release is reprinted from North Tyneside Council's website: North Tyneside Council will move its 2020 Remembrance services online because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The council has taken the decision not to go ahead with its annual services and parades because of

the ongoing restrictions and the need to protect visitors and residents. Instead, residents who wish to pay their respects will be invited to follow a pre-recorded service online and observe a two-minute silence on Sunday 8 November. North Tyneside's Mayor, Norma Redfearn CBE, said: *"Here in North Tyneside we have always supported and honoured the commitment of our veterans, serving personnel and their families, so it is with great sadness that we have to announce this. We know that not being able to pay our respects together at local cenotaphs as we usually would is an unwelcome break from tradition for many, but the health and safety of our visitors and residents continues to be our priority. On Sunday 8 November, a pre-recorded service will incorporate footage from cenotaphs, and include wreath laying, prayers and words from the Royal British Legion branch chairmen. We hope residents will join the service online where possible and we encourage everyone to pay their respects by observing the two-minutes' silence at 11am."*

Further information on how to access the service online will be circulated in advance on the council's website: find this at mynorthtyneside.gov.uk or simply google North Tyneside. You can also show your support by downloading and displaying a Remembrance poppy from the Royal British Legion.

The Malcolm Soulsby 365 Tune A Day Challenge: Update

Malcolm Soulsby writes: First of all, I would like to thank everyone who has donated to this project and offered encouragement. I am also both flattered and humbled that there are several folk who have said they look forward to each new piece posted on Facebook and YouTube every morning to set them up for the day. This endeavour is less than halfway through so there is plenty of time left to add to the total in sponsorship or request a piece of music to be played on a specific date (if feasible) for a donation.

On Sunday 25th September I played Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*, sponsored by Joan and Alan Dotchin; this was the 133rd piece posted on the Holy Saviour's Music Facebook page, so that leaves me with 233 to go. This may seem daunting, but there is a huge wealth of music written for organ, much of which does not get heard in modern times, recitalists tend to select pieces which may be too long for normal church use.

Other pieces specifically sponsored have included the famous Toccata from *Symphonie V* by Widor and *Farewell to Stromness* by Peter Maxwell Davies. John Pearce has requested a diverse selection to play on family anniversaries; these will crop up during the remainder of the challenge, giving me and the instrument

something to get our teeth into. I have also been asked for a version of Mark Knopfler's *Going Home* from the film *Local Hero* (watch this space)

How can you support this challenge? As far as requests are concerned, these will be accommodated if I can play them. If you do have a request for a specific date, then please give me as much notice as possible. I am perfectly happy to re-post pieces I have already posted with any required dedication for birthdays etc. I will however still post a different piece that day as well, part of the challenge is a different piece each day.

Karen Bilton has informed me that the total raised by last Sunday was around £520, with gift aid this is more than £600; this is impressive, thank you all so much.

How do you contribute? Ideally, by bank transfer to the Holy Saviour's bank account using the reference *365 challenge*, however I am sure cheques and cash can be accepted but please give them to Karen Bilton, Steve, Malcolm Railton or one of the wardens.

How do you contact me to request? I work full time, so answering phone calls is difficult. Sending an email or a note left with Steve Dixon is easier for me. My email is malsoulsby63@hotmail.co.uk, and using that helps me to keep everything in one place.

Correspondence

Betty Wall writes: My husband John and I would like to thank everyone for their generosity, best wishes, flowers, cards, and kind thoughts on our Sixtieth Wedding Anniversary. It was an overwhelming day for us, completed with a lovely photographic congratulations card from the Queen. Thank you all.



Stuart Crozier writes: Since we came out of Lockdown Round One, and I was able to return to the office (so since August for me), I've been promising John Pearce an article of some sort for the News. Little did I know ultimately it would take the nature of this valedictory note.

By the time you come to finish with this magazine, perhaps by recycling it, the end of my time in the Parish Office, and that of the role of Parish Administrator, will have come to pass as well. Covid has a lot to answer for. Believe it or not, I will have completed a full three years in the office by the time I step down on Friday 13th November. In the beginning, I was only too aware of what metaphorically big shoes I was having to fill. I will freely admit when sitting down in the office on Wednesday 1st November 2017 that I had no real appreciation of the whole range of business Elizabeth Brown had covered. As a number of you filtered into the office over the following weeks up to that Christmas, you were all extremely patient, and perhaps a little perplexed, with me as I gave you my 'rabbit in the headlights' look when you mentioned something else that Elizabeth used to do! It was such a shame that she was getting more poorly by the month around that time, and I did not want to bother her with endless trivial questions about what I should be doing.

I readily accept that I had to cut back on a number of the tasks she had so effortlessly taken in her stride. It also did not help that, unbeknown to me, I was becoming increasingly ill myself during the period up to and including Martin Jacques' departure in May 2018 (only some six months later). By that time, things had come to a head (literally) as my brain betrayed me with hydrocephalus caused by a pesky little tumour. But thanks to the wonders of the NHS and some timely emergency surgery (and perhaps a little power of prayer from Holy Saviours), it seems as if for now that that is water, so to speak, under the bridge.

I count myself extremely fortunate to have witnessed at first hand the steadying of the ship since then, due in the main to the sterling efforts of David Bilton, Diane Bayley and Janice Torpy as your churchwardens, the collective efforts of the PCC and last but not least Martin's replacement as our vicar, Steve Dixon. It is seldom in my varied naval and charitable career to date that I have had the honour and privilege to meet and work with someone as focussed, diligent, compassionate and thoughtful as Steve (I have to say something nice about him because I need him to act as my main referee for upcoming job applications!). Seriously, we here in Tynemouth are hugely blessed to have Steve and Claire leading us and I only hope they feel able to stay with us for years to come. Unless he gets promoted to the Bishopric of Newcastle, in which case we really could not stand in his way... or could we?

Whilst mentions in despatches go to Karen Bilton, John Pearce, Malcolm Soulsby, Betty Wall, Ian Crawford (not least for the scones!) and the Holy Dusters, there are otherwise just far too many of you to thank individually for your kindness and patience over the past three years. A bit like the Queen's Honours, the list would otherwise take up the whole of this magazine. You know who you are. I will not be moving anywhere. Even if, as and when I get another job, Jill and I will forever be staying in Tynemouth, where you and the community at large have made us feel so very welcome. We absolutely love it here. So I'm afraid you will still see me about, dog walking and occasionally attending church (and, we hope, the wine club too).

To end this piece as I began it, I think I am right to say that there have only been two Parish Administrators in a formal capacity, Elizabeth and me. I owe my time to her, and if I have managed to do half the job as well as she did, then that is good enough for me. God bless, Elizabeth, and to you all, au revoir and yours aye.

BIBLICAL WORDS [VI]:

**‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
so must the Son of man be lifted up’**

Clive Harper writes One of the little problems we face during the period of Corona Virus is finding a time to collect post which, for one reason or another, cannot be delivered.

Thus it was, one rainy day in August, that I was standing in a long line of hopefuls outside the Post Office collection centre waiting to claim a parcel which required a signature. In fact, the queue went down quite quickly and I collected a parcel which happened to be a birthday present for Valerie; and upon opening it, she found a silver chain and cross with a tiny snake (or serpent) wound around it, a present from a family member.

There was a time when the Israelites in the Wilderness were being bitten by snakes and they, understandably, complained to Moses. Upon enquiry, God told Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole; and if someone was bitten by a snake, they were to look at the bronze serpent, high and lifted up, and they would be healed.

Fast forward a thousand years or so, and Jesus is having a conversation with a man called Nicodemus from which emerged a wonderful passage in St John's Gospel, including the words: *‘just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so must the Son of man be lifted up’* and it goes on to say: *‘so that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life’*; the healing connotations are clear: the serpent, that old

adversary, the cause of sin in the world, becomes a conduit for health and healing through the power of the crucifixion of Jesus.

I once stood on the hill in Jordan and looked down on the promised Land where traditionally Moses had stood all those years before and there, on the hillside, was a huge iron cross with a metal serpent wrapped around it; it was the nearest Moses got to the Promised Land and, we may hope, to the serpent too. It can be argued that Moses did get there but by another way; I will discuss this in a later article.

Readers may know that the snake around a pole is also a symbol of world health deriving from the ancient Greek 'Asclepius' revered in Ancient Greece as a god of healing. Whether this came before or after the serpent in the wilderness can be debated. But there is a story to be told and another short chapter was written that day I came back from the postal centre. Needless to say Valerie was delighted with both the gift and its healing connotations!

Review: Report: IICSA and the Anglican Church

John Pearce writes: Although no stretch of the imagination could possibly turn this report into anything resembling recreational reading, I feel that it ought to be required reading for everyone who holds an office of any kind, clerical, lay or administrative, in the Church of England. The report itself can be downloaded from <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/investigation-into-failings-by-the-anglican-church/> free of charge; and, at 164 pages, it can be read in the course of a day. There is a great deal in the report which dismays, disgusts, shocks and frightens, and this literally parochial family magazine cannot be the place for me to show just why this is the case. At the same time I think I can say that it illustrates very clearly the principle that, when institutions of any kind, across the whole of society, discover any kind of wrong-doing in their ranks their first instinctive reaction is often to internalise, cover up, mitigate and minimise both the wrong-doing and its effects. The first proper resort – reporting suspected criminality to the police so that it may properly be investigated – all too often becomes the last. In secular organisations such as the police, the military, schools and the professions, this is understandable although still inexcusable; in a church it is a kind of blasphemy.

This notion is partly recognised by one of the report's conclusions, which is that diocesan bishops should no longer be responsible for the oversight of safeguarding, and the report makes it clear, detailing many hideous examples of inadequate pastoral response at various levels, why this should be so. At the same time, the shifting of this responsibility to lay safeguarding officers employed

centrally by the church seems to me to be a half-hearted measure. A suspected case of sexual abuse should be referred to only one agency, the police, such that the benefit of any doubt is extended to possible victims rather than possible perpetrators. This is a policy not without risk – of malicious and fraudulent accusations, for example – but doing the right thing is never a no-risk policy.

One of the more telling passages in the report is Section B6, *The Culture of the Church of England*, which writes of “the extent to which this [culture has] inhibited the proper investigation, exposure and prevention of child sexual abuse”. Five factors are identified, as follows:

- **clericalism** – in which the “moral authority of the clergy was perceived as being beyond reproach”
- **tribalism** – which leads to “disproportionate loyalty to members of one’s own tribe, a group within an institution based on close personal ties and beliefs”
- **naivety** – belief that “religious practices and adherence to a moral code made the sexual abuse of children very unlikely or indeed impossible”
- **reputation** – some church leaders “sought to keep allegations out of the public domain and the resulting lack of engagement with external agencies helped to create an almost unchallengeable authority in the church”
- **sexuality** – there was a “culture of fear and secrecy within the church about sexuality. Some members.....wrongly conflated homosexuality with the sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults. There was a lack of transparency, open dialogue and candour about sexual matters.....”

I have said enough, I hope, to show why all Christians of all denominations, never mind only ours, should read and ponder this report, if only because we all need to understand and act on the reasons why the IICSA investigation into our church was even necessary in the first place. There is no doubt that its publication has dealt the moral authority of the Church of England a severely damaging blow. Only by understanding how this damage was incurred can we work towards preventing its being repeated. Another such blow could well be fatal; and should we not read, mark, inwardly digest and learn from the lessons of this report, then we will have volunteered for that blow. The book of Proverbs, chapter 1, verse 5, also refers.

The Pew debate

Steve Dixon writes: I welcome the debate concerning the pews which our editor, John, initiated through the *Parish News*, and feel I should at least put my head above the parapet and share my thoughts.

Last autumn we began the *Leading Your Church into Growth* programme where we considered how we make our church more welcoming to new people and visitors. I proposed that we remove the pew dividers to make the church more accessible and prevent the frequent confusion at baptisms, weddings, funerals and school services. This was supported by comments from others. Research with the church architect into the implications of removing the dividers showed that there would be a need for structural support of the pews at considerable cost. Given the costs, the PCC felt that it was necessary to hold a wider debate on the future of the pews before spending any money. In light of this, I am keen to hear the views of others about the pews, though I could not sanction any action being taken during the covid crisis. Indeed, the pew dividers have been useful as we keep physical distance in church, and the pews are relatively easy to clean.

Other than the pew dividers, I hold no particular view on the future of the pews. I feel there are relatively balanced pros and cons.

On the positive side, the pews are a very efficient way to seat people in church, allowing us to host large services and events. The pews are always set up, so we don't have the task of arranging chairs between events. Though I am not a great traditionalist, I appreciate the views of those who feel the pews add to the beauty and history of our building. Having worked in churches which had chairs rather than pews, there were those (usually from beyond the congregation) who held the opinion that it was no longer a 'proper' church and refused to use it as a venue for baptisms, weddings and funerals. There is the cost; while we might have a slim chance of recouping some of the cost from sales of pews, I suspect it would be a costly venture to remove them and replace them with chairs.

On the negative side, the pews are inflexible and prevent us from using the space more creatively for different functions and events [though we have a Hall and Centre which are very flexible]. The pews force us into regimented seating which subtly conveys an unfortunate sense of 'sit still and listen to the important people at the front'. We have recently built the very useful ramp to the porch door, but once inside, the pews prevent a person in a wheelchair from easily sitting next to family and friends. The pews are uncomfortable during longer services and events. Movable chairs might move us away from the deeply unwelcoming phrase, 'that's my seat'.

These are just a few of the pros and cons as I see them. Whatever our feelings and opinions about the pews, I welcome your views and would ask us all to remember

that the church building is not the church; we, the people, are the church. The building and the pews are there to serve us in our worship and our mission of reaching out to those we hope will say their 'yes' to Jesus.

Editor's note: In thanking Steve for a notably balanced and fair assessment of the issues, I would also like to pick up his point about costs. When I first started thinking about this, I had in mind the possibility that we could meet the cost of removing and replacing the pews by engaging one of the several companies I found on-line who buy, refurbish and sell on redundant church furniture. See, for example, the website <https://www.antiquechurchfurniture.co.uk/> where a range of remodelled pews is for sale at prices which seem to range around £300 or so for a two-seater bench remodelled from a larger pew. Our current pews, installed in 1891 [replacing the original 1841 pews, so it has been done before.....] fall right in the middle of their preferred range of age and style. As their website says: *"The sort of things we really like are Victorian or Edwardian in origin, typically made between 1880-1910, but we are not too restrictive, and handle a lot of 20th century furnishings as well"*. Based in Lancashire, *Antique Church Furniture* would seem to me to be worth contacting and asking a few questions. I say this because, although I am firmly of the opinion that removing the pews would be a creative and fruitful move for us to make, my continued support for such a venture would depend on its being, as nearly as possible, cost-neutral.

At this stage in our history, spending large sums of our capital on furniture that we want [rather than actually need] would suggest uncomfortable parallels with refurbishing the deck-chairs on *Titanic*. More than that, I have too often said and written that the presence of the Christian church in Tynemouth depends on us, as people, rather than our building, to be taken seriously should I disagree with Steve's final point. That said, I hope that in the months ahead we may investigate, without prejudice, the various possibilities that are open to us, although bearing always in mind that a church being seen to spend large sums of money on its own comfort is probably not setting a good example in terms of priorities.

AND NOW THE GOOD NEWS.....

John Pearce writes: My picture overleaf shows the church of St Stephen, West Bowling, Bradford, as it was in 2005 when it was on the point of closing. It had a congregation of six people, and the church fabric was disintegrating. The parish of St Stephen is in a predominantly Muslim area of Bradford, and the church was on the point of redundancy.

Fifteen years on, the church is filled with life and activity, and forms a social and emotional hub for an area with many social and economic problems. An article by Harriet Sherwood in *The Observer* of October 18th said: *"Now, St Stephen's is a*

vital hub, providing support and activities in an area of acute deprivation. The nave has been cleared of its pews, and heating has been installed. On a typical day you



[Picture Credit: CC Creative Commons]

might find an exercise class, a support group for asylum seekers and refugees, community meals being cooked and served, singing and stories for infants, mosaic-making, and people hunting for jobs or claiming benefits online. The old organ chamber is now a children's clothes bank. Outside, a gardening club looks after the church grounds which accommodate a play area. A formerly derelict church hall hosts family parties and celebrations that can't be squeezed into the back-to-back terraced homes in the neighbourhood".

Although Ms Sherwood's article doesn't say so, this dramatic change in the church's fortunes appears to have coincided with the appointment of Revd. Jimmy Hinton as vicar in 2005 and a renewed vision of what a church can be for in the twenty first century. The article doesn't say either how many people now attend Sunday services at St Stephen's. There's a bit of me thinks that those numbers matter rather less than the fact that many of the people who use the church on the other six days of the week are responding practically to the principle of ἀγάπη, charity, the love of man for his neighbour, never mind who his neighbour actually

is. And in considering the path we must follow to lead our church into growth, we need, as Jimmy Hinton says, to “*look outwards, look beyond ourselves, to the needs of a needy community*”.

The parish of Tynemouth might not look at first sight like a needy community, but it is. Its needs are different in kind from those we might find in other areas of Tyneside, but they are no less real for being emotional and familial rather than economic. And if Holy Saviour's doesn't try to meet those needs, then who will?

What is genuinely encouraging about places like St Stephen's is that they are not, as you might imagine, untypical of what is happening throughout our communion. A recent report, commissioned by the National Churches Trust and carried out by a research group called **State of Life**, reports that the 16,000 British Anglican churches between them were supporting 35,000 social projects before the pandemic threatened to grind them to a halt. These projects included 2,300 children's breakfast and holiday clubs, 2,700 community cafes, 5,000 lunch clubs and coffee mornings, 2,400 night shelters, 4,000 parent and toddler groups and 8,000 food banks.

State of Life is an independent social research organisation which exists to help charities and churches to design research which can show them how to evaluate the impact and value of their projects. Those evaluations can then be used improve the projects themselves. Apart from the National Churches Trust, they have done research for such diverse organisations as St John's Ambulance, GirlGuiding, the National Trust and Swim England. One of the more striking facts to emerge from their survey of church social work is that its annual market value is **£2.4 billion** per year – which is to say that if private organisations were to set up, staff, house and superintend all of these activities at commercial going rates, and pay their staff the National Living Wage, it would cost that very £2.4 billion to do so. More than that, **State of Life** states that the non-market value of all this church activity is at least another £10 billion a year. Such a figure must be speculative, as **State of Life's** report makes clear: “*Non-market (also called social and welfare) value describes an activity or outcome that is difficult to measure in pounds and pence. For example, things like health, happiness, confidence or trust are incredibly important but difficult to put a price on – let alone buy.*”

The other heartening fact to emerge from the survey is the diversity and size of this church-based voluntary sector. There are more food banks than branches of McDonalds in this country [a fact shameful in many more ways than one, you may feel], and the majority of them were set up and are run by churches. More specialist church-based projects include credit unions, youth clubs, mental health support, counselling services, and addiction-support groups.

All of which might strike readers, as it struck me, as a whole raft of reasons to be cheerful. Unhappily, of course, the pandemic has curtailed a considerable amount of this activity, although, as bad as things have become, a third of churches managed to carry on their work, and up to 90% have continued to provide a degree of community support in varying measure. If nothing else, the example of St Stephen's, and the larger national picture it reflects, may be said to point us all firmly in our next direction of travel, once a Covid-19 vaccine allows church life to begin to edge its way back towards normality.

One of the significant factors in the success of St Stephen's Bradford has been its complete openness to everyone in its local, predominantly Muslim, community whether they are religious or not. Let Jimmy Hinton's be the last words for the time being: *"When I hear people of another faith describing this place as 'our church', that's incredibly precious. The key is keeping going. We will find ways of supporting people, whatever is coming down the track"*.

And thanks to Malcolm Railton for this lovely postscript: no chance, it seems, of Revd. Railton ever being allowed to stand on his dignity...One thing is certain, even in these very uncertain times. You can always count on children and young people to bring you down to earth.

My favourite (only) grandson Dylan, whom some of you may have seen in church, plays centre forward for Redheugh Boys Club. I have been going to watch him play, and sadly they have lost all of the matches that I have been to. He was playing on the Saturday morning when I was ordained so I was unable to attend that game. And guess what? they won.

When he turned up at my Ordination in the afternoon, he was very pleased with himself and immediately and sarcastically announced that I was now banned from watching him play. He had decided that my increasingly holy presence was distracting the team's efforts and causing the defeats. He thought this was extremely amusing and he will share his humour with anyone who will listen.

A life changing moment for me: being priested now, and a twelve year old is taking the mickey. I think it is fantastic and long may it continue; listen to children and young people, they will help you to maintain your humility.

**All you need to do to give God a laugh these days is to make a plan; however that may be, below are the provisional dates for the December *Parish News*.
ALL COPY TO THE EDITOR BY 1900 ON WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 25th**

Copy please to me by post, email or the News Mailbox in the Parish Centre
Completed artwork to go to YPD Creative overnight on Sunday November 29th
Printed copies to be collected from the printers on Wednesday, December 2nd
THE PARISH NEWS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN CHURCH ON SUNDAY DECEMBER 6th

The co-operative funeralcare

Our caring staff are here to listen and advise you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Full range of monumental masonry

Forest Hall Station Road
0191 259 9964

North Shields Billy Mill Avenue
0191 258 0025

Whitley Bay Algernon Place
0191 252 5151

Wallsend 105-109 High Street West
0191 262 5100

www.co-operativefuneralcare.co.uk



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE



[formerly of Cleveland Road]
PRIVATE CHAPELS OF REST
24hr SERVICE
64 HOWARD STREET,
NORTH SHIELDS
SIMPLE CREMATIONS
FROM £2768.50
Info.@rjohnsonfunerals.co.uk
0191-2574627

Anderson & Garland

‘Local Sale.....

London Prices’



Our Specialist knew that this Imperial Chinese Water Pot was special, we sold it for a record £270,000, after worldwide interest

R. JOHNSON
FUNERAL DIRECTOR

If you are thinking of selling any Fine Art or Antiques contact the professionals to see what we can do for you.

You might get a pleasant surprise too!

'For expertise on your doorstep

choose Anderson & Garland.

Anderson House, Crispin Court

Newbiggin Lane, Westerhope

Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 1BF

Tel - 0191 4303000

HOME SERVICES NE LTD

High Quality Domestic and
Home Support Service.

Janet Lee,

Managing Director

Gillian Gracen,

Office Manager

0191 296 8638

07890690202

[Home ServicesNELTD.com](http://HomeServicesNELTD.com)

Email - info@andersonandgarland.com

Stagg & Son - General Builders North Shields

Over 35 years experience in the
building trade

- Reliable Service
- Quality Assured
- Free Estimates



A huge range of services at competitive prices. These include brickwork, fencing, decking, garden walls, flooring, paving, lock fitting, plastering, kitchen fitting, pointing, drainage and hanging doors.

Tel 0800 644 2012 or 077944 02367

or via email:

staggandson@yahoo.com

R. J. RYLAND FUNERAL SERVICES

1 Farrington Road, Cullercoats

Tel: 252 6500 or 257 0222

**Serving North Tyneside
and Newcastle Area**

- † **Personal 24-hour Service**
- † **Private Rest Facilities**
- † **Pre-arrangement Plans for
Peace of Mind**

R.J. Ryland
MBIE, DIP.FD, MBIFD

***Caring for your loved
ones with dignity and
understanding***

www.rylandfuneral.co.uk



E TURNBULL & SON LTD

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

EST 1832

Independent Family Funeral Directors
Serving the community for over 200
years

A complete Funeral Service
Offering Personal and
Professional Guidance throughout

**PRIVATE CHAPELS OF REST,
PRE PAID FUNERAL PLANS
24 HOUR SERVICE
LUXURY LIMOUSINES
SIMPLE FUNERAL SERVICE AND
CREMATION FROM £2968.50**

North Shields: Albion Road
0191 2571201

www.eturnbull.co.uk

e-mail: info@eturnbull.co.uk

Tel' Paul Preston on 2570574

Or 077482 35 867



**WANT TO FEEL GOOD ?
WE MAKE YOU FEEL GREAT !**

Book your Appointment Today

swissphysio

Tynemouth Metro Station, NE30 4RE

Tel **0191 296 0567**

info@Swissphysio.co.uk www.swissphysio.co.uk

WHEN IT HAS TO BE, IT HAS TO BE THE GRAND HOTEL

HOME MAINTENANCE



Electrician

General Plumbing

Garden Work

Flat-pack furniture

Fencing

Painting

0191 293 6666

ANYTHING YOU NEED

NO JOB TOO SMALL

**Reliable & honest
References available**

NORTHEAST

BOILER CARE

Grand Hotel

As safety, servicing and installation specialist!

Services we offer:

- Boiler Service/Installation/Repair
- Warm Air Service/Installation/Repair
- Gas Fire Service/Installation/Repair
- Cooker Service/ Installation
- Landlord CP12 Certificates

Located 0.4 miles away

JONATHAN BENNETT – Gas Engineer



Tel: 0191 2846133

Mobile: 07713 242 814

Email: neboilercare@btinternet.com

Website: www.neboilercare.co.uk

As this edition of the Parish News goes to the press, [October 25th] 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.

Vicar Revd. Steve Dixon
Email vicar@holysaviours.org.uk
Telephone 07729 393 580
 0191 697 4562
Curate Revd. Malcolm Railton
Email curate@holysaviours.co.uk
Telephone 0191 262 3028
Parish Administrator Stuart Crozier
Church Office Tel. 0191 257 6250
Email office@holysaviours.org.uk
Church website: www.holysaviours.org.uk

Churchwardens:

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.