

PARISH NEWS



DECEMBER 2021

Price £1.50



THE CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL, December 2019

Picture Credit, Chris and Linda Benneworth

CHURCH OF THE HOLY SAVIOUR, TYNEMOUTH

www.holysaviours.org.uk

Worship at Holy Saviours: December 2021

[correct at the time of going to press –Monday November 29th 2021]

The relaxation of Covid 19 rules last July has allowed us to return to a measure of normality in church. For now, our worship pattern is as follows:

SUNDAY: 1000 Parish Eucharist: said, with sung hymns and an anthem

Communion is received under both kinds, using an intincted wafer. Until further notice, communicants will receive the sacrament standing, will be stewarded to and from the altar, and be invited to sanitise their hands both before and after receiving.

1800 Evening Prayer: said, with sung hymns

WEDNESDAY: 1000 Communion, said using the Book of Common Prayer

Face-masks and hand-sanitising: neither of these customs is now required, but worshippers may wear masks and use hand-sanitizer should they wish. Mask-wearing at **Evening Prayer** is optional, as the small attendance makes it easy to observe social distancing; hand-sanitising is still available to those who wish it.

Singing: We are now singing three hymns at *Parish Eucharist*, and three at *Evening Prayer*. The wearing of masks is encouraged while we are singing. Anyone preferring not to sing is invited to sit near the back of church.

Other features of our worship – altar servers, Crucifers, Gospel and Offertory processions – have now been re-introduced, and rotas for these are in operation. For the moment, retiring collections will continue rather than passing the plate. A contactless payment system is now available for the increasing number of the parishioners who, like the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, prefer not to carry cash.

Dioceses and arch-dioceses continue to recommend our best practice, but we all need to remember that responsibility for managing the later stages of the pandemic has now been placed entirely on individual parish priests by the senior officials of the church. Moreover, the national emphasis in recent weeks has changed. Rather than preventing the spread of Covid 19 by restrictions on social mixing and movement, the policy now is to limit and control its effects on those who contract it by an expanded vaccination programme. In effect, we are aiming for national herd immunity. It is our Christian duty [as well as common sense] for us to do our utmost to make sure that Revd. Steve is supported in his intricate and difficult task of applying national policy to suit local needs and wishes. Since March 2020 Steve, Joan and Malcolm have bravely shouldered an enormous workload, and have served us nobly and without stint during these atrociously difficult times: our task now is to return this support to them all.



THE VICAR WRITES...

Visiting families during a pre-baptism visit or joining a family for refreshments after a funeral has made me increasingly aware of how I scan a room to make some very quick assumptions about the people I am with. Clothing styles, room decorations, family photos, books and magazines on side tables; these and many other clues build up into a first impression. We all make these kinds of assessment – whether consciously or unconsciously – when we are somewhere new. Based on experiences and upbringing, we have particular

biases which help us decide about the relative safety of our surroundings and how best to engage with the strangers we encounter. However, the reason I have become increasingly aware of my quick assumptions is that they often subsequently turn out to be very wrong.

The first session in our recent *Living in Love and Faith* course concerned acknowledging prejudice as a pastoral principle. Our prejudices come in many forms; race, religion, gender and sexual identity, educational achievement, social standing, and many others. Some will be based on upbringing, others on experience and those which are prevalent in society. Though stronger in some areas than others, we all carry such biases; and we can only find a way beyond them if, firstly, we own and acknowledge them – not always an easy thing to do.

Though Jonathan Ross is not my usual choice of viewing, I happened across an interview on his chat show with retired footballer John Barnes. Since experiencing racism in various guises during his illustrious sporting career, he has become an outspoken campaigner against racism. His primary focus began with attempts to eradicate racism from football; but they are now more broadly focussed on racism in all aspects of life. He has just published his new book, *The Uncomfortable Truth About Racism*. In his interview, he considered that most people take a binary approach to their understanding of racism. We think of ourselves as good people if we don't use racist language or are not throwing banana skins onto football pitches. At the same time, he claims that all of us have biases which are part of our conditioning and education. However, he commented that we should not be too hard on ourselves when we react in a prejudicial manner, because it is how we are all conditioned to think.

In a similar interview I later found on *Good Morning Britain*, he stated that, "We are teaching people how not to get caught in terms of the language that they use." He reported that some people have said to him, 'I don't see you as black' or

'I see you as normal' – as if that were a compliment. "They can't say: 'I see you as a black person' because in their minds, subconsciously, that equates to them seeing me as inferior. Why can't they see me as black and normal? Why can't they see me as the same as them or, maybe in some cases, even superior?"

In his book he reasons, "You can't blame 13-year-old racist fans. Blame the environment that made them think that way. Challenge that environment... until we accept that we have been conditioned by the narrative of hundreds of years, nothing will change. It won't happen if we leave it to the system and the law makers – only when we alter our individual perspectives. We have to do it ourselves."

I find his words not only well considered, but also compelling in their authenticity. Moreover, they are deeply prophetic for our modern age. John Barnes is radically challenging us to remember the command to love your neighbour as you love yourself. Sometimes that means some soul searching about where our biases come from and being willing to be open about our misunderstanding of those who are different to ourselves. Acknowledging prejudice is a key to discovering how better to love one another.

Steve

Editor's note: *The Uncomfortable Truth About Racism*, by John Barnes, is published by *Headline Publishing Group* at a cover-price of £20.00 in hardback. Currently it is being discounted by Waterstones at £17.99. A paperback edition is available on Amazon for £8.79, Kindle users may buy it for £9.99, and an Audible talking-book, narrated by the author, is available at £19.99.

Praying and Listening for Mission Prayer Meeting

9:30 – 10:00 every Saturday:

THIS MONTH: DECEMBER 4th, 11th and 18th



Should you wish to contribute to the prayer group but cannot attend on Saturdays,
why not set aside the time at home?

Either on Saturdays or another regular time during your week?

EDITORIAL

John Pearce writes: It is a truism that Christmas, as we celebrate it in the western world, has been debased out of all recognition. Once a religious festival, it is now a grotesque commercial orgy, materialism *in excelsis*. The only recognisably Christian element in it, apart from church services which are attended by about 4% of our population, is the seasonal increase in charitable activity. Food banks enjoy a surge of donations [which enables us to go on ignoring the fact that, in a country as rich as ours, the existence of food banks is an obscenity]; churches, schools, charities, the Salvation Army, *Crisis at Christmas* organise special seasonal projects to succour the lonely, rejected and alienated, and groups like *The Peoples' Kitchen*, *Nite Bite* and *Walking With* redouble their efforts to ensure that a few crumbs from more well-appointed tables fall where they will do some good.

What is perhaps less apparent is the fact that the retail industry has systematically plundered our church calendar to underpin its own commercial agenda. By the time this is read, it will be only six weeks before the feast of St Valentine will dominate our weekend shopping, horribly ornamented by an enormous and thoroughly ghastly frieze of red satin hearts, heart-shaped chocolates and greeting cards for the true loves whom we can all toast in sparkling white wine acid enough to strip paint. Supermarkets now look to February 14th to energise the fourth biggest spike in their profits throughout the commercial year. This vulgarisation of St Valentine is probably what led the Vatican in 1969, to remove him from the list of saints whose day is internationally recognised and celebrated at special Masses.

Easter, by contrast, has not been so much vulgarised as bowdlerised. You will never find the two central images of Easter – a man crucified, in the extremity of an unimaginably painful death, and, three days on, the same man's empty tomb – on an Easter greetings card, or decorating the Seasonal Goods aisle in a supermarket. Instead we have the unspeakably naff Easter Bunny – a twee version of the Easter Hare celebrated in the mediaeval church because of the legend that hares were hermaphrodites and could fertilise themselves, thus echoing the virginity of Christ's mother. The other symbol of Easter, the egg, is, of course a pre-Christian pagan symbol of fertility and rebirth, and, as a boy, I remember hard-boiling eggs in onion skins [which turned the eggs a rich golden colour] to exchange with other family members on Easter day. Instead of this we now organise Easter Egg hunts for our children - a festival of gluttony which would only make sense if it were preceded by six weeks of abstention from chocolate.

Of All-Hallow's Eve the less said, the better. Christians who claim that Halloween is a satanic festival need, in my view, to grow up; they are often the same people who claim that the Harry Potter novels are pagan propaganda. At the same time, I

remember once when I arrived at Newcastle Central Station on the late Saturday evening of Halloween, and the horrifying spectacle that unfolded through my taxi window on the way home – people dressed as skeletons, ghosts, vampires, zombies, demons, witches and warlocks. It was grotesque; but what made it horrible was knowing that very few of the young men and women on their Saturday night out would connect their fancy dress party with the truth of All Hallows: thinking of and praying for those whose love once enriched their lives in reality but who now could only do so in the memory of those left behind, including these scantily dressed ghosts parading their goose-pimples down Grey Street.

It is this sense of disconnection between the reality of our Christian beliefs, and the illusion of their commercialisation, which I find depressing. This disconnection has been particularly emphasised in this year of grace 2021 by the relentless bombardment of Christmas advertising which, as this is written on November 27th, has been going on for three weeks already and will, it seems, go on for another four. It is obvious, after nearly two years in which the economy has been hamstrung by the pandemic, that the retail trade wishes to make as much profit as possible from the Christmas season. At the same time this cannot excuse the way in which this year they have gone completely overboard in their campaigns. Nor do the supermarkets, *parfumeurs*, *chocolatiers* and confectioners help themselves by buying into the worst pretensions of the advertising industry. There would be something honest about an advertisement that said, in effect, *“Eat and drink yourself to a standstill for less than the supermarket next door will charge you”*, but such bluntness would be seen as crude and offensive. Instead we get pretentious “narratives”, miniature soap-operas, meta-advertisements rich in cheap cultural allusions, the kind of semi-intellectual tat which helps advertising executives to sell themselves the notion that they work in a “creative” industry.

It is the bogus artiness, the naff knowingness of Christmas advertising that, this year, has crystallised for me what it is about the commercialisation of the Christian year which annoys me so much – the retail industry has hijacked our festivals, destroying their joy, their mystery, their otherness, their glimpses of the numinous, replacing them with a balance sheet where the birth of the Redeemer is celebrated only in terms of profit and loss, what time the hungry sheep look up and are not fed.

It seems to me that in continuing to assent to the commercialisation of our Christian festivals, Christians have surrendered something which, as a church, we need seriously to think about retrieving. The antonym of sanctification is desecration: and we who assent to desecration need to think very hard about why we do so and whether it should continue. How can we sanctify Christmas again, set it apart once more, begin to undo its desecration in December 2022?

For once, I am asking a question to which I don't think that I already know the answer. The *Lead Your Church into Growth* course in December 2019 taught me two things. The first was that Holy Saviours has an extensive presence in our parish, only one aspect of which is church attendance – a fact emphasised by the closures forced on us by the pandemic, and that this is something which we need urgently to exploit and to capitalise. The second is that we, as a church, do not seem to have taken on board the urgency of the task that faces us if we are to survive as a worshipping community. Maybe a first step could be to devise a plan locally to begin to reclaim Christmas as a religious festival. If we want to do so, then we need to start thinking about it now. The finance company *Park Christmas Savings* is already advertising its Christmas Club scheme for 2022, with the slogan, *Spread the Cost, Spread the Joy*. As Christians, our duty is to prioritise genuine spiritual joy long before we count the material cost. Any ideas?

Editor's note: *if you think that some of the above seems familiar, then well done for remembering that substantial portions of it were published as an editorial in the January 2020 issue of the Parish News. Any impact it might have had on our thinking about Christmas 2021 was of course blown away by the renewed impact on our church life of the pandemic which hit us so hard at this time last year. It is because I think that a local **Reclaim Christmas** campaign could provide us with a valuable evangelical focus in the coming months that I have thought it worth reprinting. If it was worth writing once, I hoped it might repay a second reading.*

Notes and News

Christmas Flowers

Janice, Sheila, Barbara, Julie and Diane write: Yes everyone, it's that time of year again, as we find ourselves entering Advent in the church's calendar. Although we have our Christmas Tree Festival [see below] being held this year between 13th - 16th December [which always brightens up the church] there will be no flowers displayed during this period. However, the Flower Team would like you to know we are taking this time to plan what we would like to do to celebrate the Christmas period in the church.

We are doing this in two stages. Firstly the greenery will be put in place on Friday 17th December. If anyone has *cupressus*, holly (plain or variegated), spruce, ivy, eucalyptus or laurel that you could let us have, then this would be gratefully received. It can be dropped off at church on the morning of Friday December 17th.

The flowers will be added the following week, on Thursday 23rd December, in time for Christmas Eve. We are once again hoping for your help by asking for a

donation towards the flowers. To help with the collecting we will place baskets around church and in the parish centre. And of course if there are any budding flower arrangers who would like to give us a hand with the displays or even just help tidying up, you are most welcome. Refreshments will be provided.

A new Flower List for 2022 will be put onto the notice-board in the church porch soon. Please keep an eye out for this if you wish to donate for a birthday, anniversary or memorial.

Thank you for your support throughout the year and may we take this opportunity to wish everyone all the very best for a joyous Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

The Christmas Tree Festival, 2021

Chris Benneworth writes: We are looking forward to this year's Christmas Tree Festival, to be held in the church from Wednesday 14th to Thursday 16th December. We have invited church groups, uniformed organisations, local clubs and businesses to participate and we hope that as many people as possible will come and enjoy this celebration of Christmas.

The opening hours for the festival are as follows:

Tuesday 14th	3:00 – 7:00
Wednesday 15th	3:00 – 7:00
Thursday 16th	3:00 – 6:30

We are delighted that this year there will be organ music specially provided by Malcolm Soulsby to give a suitable background to the event. There will be a children's trail to help explore the trees, as well as refreshments for everyone.

We'll also be having entertainment each evening. On Tuesday, from 7:00, the Newcastle Concert Band will be rehearsing Christmas music. Their musical director, David Milner, has entered into the spirit of the occasion by creating the first ever Newcastle Concert Band Christmas tree which will be on display throughout the festival. On Wednesday, from 7:30, the church's own music group will be rehearsing. There's no charge for either of these events.

On Thursday, we'll be ending the festival with a special programme of secular Christmas words and music - ***"A Puddingful of Sixpences"*** – for which tickets (including refreshments) are available from the church office. At this event there will also be a retiring collection in aid of *Nite Bite*.

All of this needs a lot of support, so we'll be looking for volunteers to assist with the stewarding of the event. There are sheets at the back of church for each session. Please help by signing up if you can.

CHURCH OF THE HOLY SAVIOUR, TYNEMOUTH

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL, 2021

Tuesday 14th – Thursday 16th December

Trees on the theme of
“The Light of the World”

will be displayed
in the church.

**Come along
and enjoy
the displays
and refreshments.**

Tuesday 14th 3:00 – 7:00

Wednesday 15th 3:00 – 7:00

Thursday 16th 3:00 – 6:30



holysaviours.org.uk 0191 257 6250

STILL WANTED: HOLY DUSTERS.....

Reprinted from the October Parish News..... *The Holy Duster* team meets fortnightly on a Friday morning, the salary is attractive – the pleasure of team fellowship and the satisfaction of a well-mopped floor – and there is a bonus scheme in which dusters score with one of Ian Crawford's prize-winning cheese scones. If you would like to volunteer to help please contact Karen Bilton on 0191 258 0270 or at kebilton58@gmail.com or speak to Stuart Crozier in the church office. George Herbert's poem *The Elixir* – our well-loved hymn *Teach me, my God and King* – shows a metaphysical conceit in action, likening the grace of God to a precious liquid which cleans and purifies everything it touches. "*Nothing can be so mean which with this tincture – for Thy sake – will not grow bright and clean*" – in everyday terms, a sort of spiritual elbow grease. So: become a *Holy Duster*, help to keep our church the clean and welcoming place we all love, and take part in a metaphysical conceit as well. Who can resist a package deal like that?

From the Registers: September to December 2021	
Baptisms	
3 rd October	Hannah Grace Bawden
10 th October	Annika Johanna Leney
24 th October	Claire Mae Brunton Heidi Rose Brunton
31 st October	Alfred Charles Pickles
28 th November	Henry William Arthur Smith
26 th December	Gavin John Henderson
Deaths	
23 rd September	Beryl Scott
25 th October	Jacqueline (Jacky) Boyd
30 th October	Claire Ridealgh
4 th November	Rhona Marguerite Buchanan
8 th November	Kenneth Stringer





Diane Bayley writes: On December 5th we will see the launch of a church and community led initiative – *Love Grace* bags.

Many of you will have been aware of the murder of Grace Millane in New Zealand in December 2018 on the eve of her 22nd birthday. What many of you will not be aware of is that Grace Millane's cousin, Elizabeth Lee, is a member of our own congregation here at Holy Saviours, and that Grace was one of Elizabeth's bridesmaids when she married in this church on 31st August 2012.

Following that tragic event in New Zealand, Grace's family have been raising money for the White Ribbon charities here in the UK and New Zealand. The charity educates at a grassroots level and raises awareness of male violence towards women - a cause also strongly supported by the Duchess of Cornwall.

Like many women, Grace loved a nice handbag, and so her family took things one step further working alongside a local women's refuge to fill handbags to give to women who are escaping from domestic violence and seeking refuge. An initial target of fifty bags was the aim, but this was surpassed because of the generosity and offers of help. Further appeals have run in New Zealand, Singapore, USA and Canada and have resulted in well over 7000 women receiving a *Love Grace* handbag. The feedback from those who have received these bags has been amazing and often very moving; for example: "Receiving the bag was the first time I felt like someone both believed me and believed in me".

Domestic violence towards women is a huge issue, as we are made aware of time and time again in the news, and most recently with the Sarah Everard case. Cases of domestic violence during the lockdowns since March 2020, increased massively, and this in turn also increased the massive pressure on refuges for victims and their children.

So here is the challenge.....

How many ladies are bought handbags as presents or, buy them themselves after which those bags sit in cupboards and never used? How many of us get birthday and Christmas presents that we don't get round to using, or are just not to your taste? Have you got cupboards full of unused toiletries? And all those *buy one get one free* offers – could you add one or two to your shopping?

We are launching our appeal now at the beginning of December in the hope of making use of any unwanted Christmas gifts. Or maybe you could pick up a few extra things in your Christmas shopping to donate?

Now, this may be sounding like something we have done before at Holy Saviours, and in some ways it is not far off. However, we are also aiming to link in with the community, for support from the friendship groups, clubs and societies where relationships already exist.

So: which groups of people do you engage with outside of church? Which of your friends would be keen and willing to be involved in some way? This is about Church and community coming together and strengthening local links with one another.

Does your street have a Whatsapp group? Are you the member of a golf club? Are you a member of any sports group, music group, drama group, book club, women's group?

The beauty of this appeal is that it is easy for us all to get involved at some level. We aim to have posters and flyers out round the village; and if anyone wants to spread the word by this method then please speak to me or ask Stuart at the church office. We are aware that so many people communicate via social media, so that is another forum for information, and the links you can use for sharing are also at the end of the article.

Fast forward eight weeks, and we are looking at the 6th of February when we aim to come together with our friends and neighbours and have a day where we make up the bags and get them ready for distribution to Women's Refuges. This will take place in the Parish Hall and we envisage having a conveyor belt-type system in place to make up the bags (already tried and tested) and alongside, having coffee, tea, scones, cakes and any other goodies people are prepared to serve.

This could be a great event in so many ways, as it can be made to work at so many levels. It is about showing and living the love we as Christians know it, as well as building new bridges and making relationships 'over the hedge' so to speak, with the people in the buzzing Tynemouth Community, and at the same time doing something to benefit others in the kind of need most of us never know.

Please consider this initiative and let's make a real difference in so many ways. If you feel there is **any way** in which you can help, please don't hesitate to contact me or Elizabeth or Steve Dixon, and watch out for updates.

The drop off point for donations initially will be the church office in the Parish Centre [weekdays from 0900 – 1200]. Otherwise please contact me, Diane Bayley, or Elizabeth Lee if you want to arrange either a drop-off or collection. Do this at dbayley2691@btinternet.com, or at elizabethmerrick@hotmail.co.uk. We will be accepting donations, whether of handbags or of items to fill them from December 5th onwards. **Fezziwigs**, in Percy Park Road, has also generously agreed to act as a collection centre. Below is a list of items which will be acceptable. You can also find more information using any of the following links: www.lovegrace.co.uk/, www.whiteribbon.org.uk, or www.facebook.com/lovegraceuk

Thank you all in anticipation, Diane and Elizabeth.

PLEASE USE THIS LIST TO PUT DONATIONS TOGETHER

Basics:	<i>toothpaste, toothbrush, shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant</i>
Extras:	<i>wipes, tissues, plasters, soap, hand-gel, lip balm, cotton buds, face cloth, sponge, torch, hairbrush, comb</i>
Luxuries:	<i>make up, perfume, hairbands, hairclips, gloves, scarf, notebook, pen, playing cards, purse, sunglasses, jewellery</i>

Please do not include: sharp items, sanitary products, pain killers, razors, alcohol, money, food, contraceptives, opened, used or damaged products.

Kenneth Stringer

David Littlefield writes: I would like to pay a brief tribute to former parishioner Kenneth Stringer who died in November. When I began life at Tynemouth High School in the early 1960s Ken Stringer was my geography teacher. He was a kindly, gentle man whom we all liked, because although he never raised his voice, he earned and commanded our respect. Some aspects of geography were difficult for me to grasp [isobars and weather fronts still remain something of a mystery] but this patient teacher spent time explaining matters to me. I was rather sad when this most likeable of schoolmasters moved on.

Ken and his late wife spent their latter years in Eastbourne House in Whitley Bay but he seemed to enjoy my occasional pre-Covid visits when we chatted amiably about schooldays long ago. Ken Stringer was a gentleman in every sense of that word, and I shall miss him.

Callum Sullivan

Editor's note: *Regular attenders at Parish Communion will recognise Callum as one of the people for whom we pray regularly. I am grateful to his great-grandmother, Anna, for this update on his progress.*



Anna Roxburgh writes: A further update on my great-grandson Callum who is now seven years old. He has chronic heart-disease, severe cerebral palsy and Di George Syndrome which causes many problems. After seven years of being on oxygen night and day, he has now come off it through the day. His parents have had discussions with the consultant at St Evelina's Hospital in London to see what can be done to mitigate and calm his cerebral palsy. For the moment these discussions are on hold because of the Covid pandemic.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their prayers for Callum, which have helped him through all his troubles.

St John's Gospel, chapter 18, verses 33 - 37

The Editor writes: *Part of the luck we enjoy at Holy Saviour's is in having clergy who are not afraid, so to speak, to look through our stained-glass windows, watch what is going on in the world, and then to bring what they see, and how it makes them feel, back into the church in their sermons. The church comes in for a*

great deal of criticism when it speaks its mind on political matters, and it has not been unknown in the past for parishioners to admonish me for mixing politics with religion. I simply cannot begin to understand why we shouldn't. There is, in my view, no area of life which is not political in some way, and which therefore can be out of place in a church, whether in a pulpit or a parish magazine. I am grateful to Revd Malcolm Railton for his permission to print the sermon he preached on November 21st, in which he developed what seem to me to be entirely sound connections between Pontius Pilate's treatment of Jesus on the morning of the first Good Friday, and the events of last November 14th which culminated in the death of Emad Al Swealmeen in Liverpool. That his death probably prevented a far worse tragedy at Liverpool Cathedral does not make it any less tragic in itself.

"Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

John concurs with the other gospel writers that this interview, of Jesus by Pilate, was an early morning affair on that first Good Friday. However, where John does differ is in the way that he distinguishes carefully between the meanings of kingship and authority, as held by the followers of Jesus and by political power. According to Josephus, a first century historian, Pilate was of an uncompromising nature and a bully – and so, like all bullies, probably a coward. Do we sometimes think of him almost as a victim of circumstance?

It has been suggested that the softer picture of Pilate which John shares with the other gospel writers, may result from early Christian attempts to gain concessions from the Roman Empire. Those who proclaimed Jesus as Lord could not avoid mentioning His crucifixion, a punishment inflicted only by the Romans, and this would identify Him as condemned under capital sentence. But what they could do, and appear to have done, is downplay the imperial participation in the execution, and heighten the complicity of the priestly and learned leadership.

The complicity of the priests is obviously considerable, but John's downplaying of the emphasis of the level of Roman participation seems unconvincing. I think there can be little doubt that the priests and Synagogue leaders had an interest in

the elimination of Jesus, even if this was more related to political reasons than religious ones. It does, however, seem unlikely that that this high priesthood would be able to get a Roman Prefect to do its will.

Until this week, as I studied this reading, I had always felt a slight sympathy for Pilate. Was he backed into a corner that he couldn't get out of? did he have a choice regarding the fate of Jesus? It now appears to me that he was in fact knowingly responsible for his actions, so I am less sympathetic. After all, the only charge brought against Jesus is a rather vague one, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."

Pilate had initially replied to the Jewish leaders, telling them to deal with Jesus under their own law but they had insisted that Pilate deal with the matter as they claimed that they had no power to put anyone to death. Whether or not they had authority to execute someone is still open to theological debate: as they say, ask two theologians a question and you will get at least three answers. However, crucifixion was carried out solely by the Romans in Palestine at that time.

Of course, the crucifixion of Jesus was necessary for the fulfilment of prophecies. This explains the angle of Pilate's questioning of Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" As prefect of the region, Pilate is rightly concerned about a potential threat to his political power but is probably unconcerned about the threat of Jesus to religious authority. Jesus responds and asks Pilate if he thought of this himself or did others tell you about me, He is really questioning the origin of the charge. Pilate quickly dissociates himself from the Jewish leaders, the people of the country which he is assigned to rule. He seems very keen to pass responsibility back to the chief priests, "Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me."

Pilate then asks Jesus what he has done. Jesus replies, "My Kingdom is not of this world," and I think this answer is crucial to our faith. Pilate was asking the nature of the political charge against Jesus; Jesus replies with a theological response. Neither Pilate nor any of the others involved should have been surprised that no political or military force was raised in support of Jesus. The words King and Kingship here refer to a different sphere than this world. This sphere of Jesus' Kingship is the belief in Him who came into the world to testify to the truth. Proclaiming the truth and being the truth is what makes Jesus a King.

Throughout this story there is a conflict between religion and politics but the Kingdom of Jesus, the truth, knows no bounds, political, geographical, or even religious. Jesus always stands for the truth and for what is right, and His Kingdom transcends all others.

In the last week there has been much criticism of the Church of England. We have been accused of naively baptising and confirming an asylum seeker who was not what he seemed.

I am not belittling what happened in Liverpool on Remembrance Sunday morning, but I refuse to accept that this is the fault of the church. It is the role of the state to uphold the law and put adequate procedures in place to facilitate this, the state should take responsibility for this. This is not the role of the Church.

Were any of you questioned this morning regarding the strength and validity of your faith and beliefs before you were admitted to this church? Of course not, and you never will be. It is our duty and should be our joy to welcome all who come to learn more of our Lord Jesus, however tentative their enquiry, whatever their motivation may be, and however they come to Him. It is not for us to judge; it is for us to share the love of God with all people, at all times, and in all situations.

The Liverpool couple, Elizabeth, and Malcolm Hitchcott, who took the bomber into their home and provided him with food and shelter, were not suckers or liberal do-gooders. They are models of Christian compassion. Whether the bomber did what he did through mental illness or through pure evil, I am sure that if the Hitchcotts had known of his intentions they would have reported him to the relevant authorities.

We must remember that just hours prior to this interview with Pilate, Jesus had broken bread and shared the cup with the man He knew was about to betray Him to death. It is part of our Christian faith that in the cosmic battle of good against evil, kindness will win the day. Love will triumph. This is the message at the heart of our Christian story: ... there is no such thing as risk free Christianity.

Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world." The Kingdom of Jesus knows no bounds, political, geographical, or even religious. He always stands for the truth and what is right. It is our duty and our joy to follow Him, and to become part of His Kingdom. Amen.

God's Agents [IV]: Moses

A series of articles on the ways God calls people into service

Clive Harper writes: At this time of year, the Christian calendar turns our thoughts to the birth of a baby and the revelation of the Christ Child. For it is a fact that if God is to be known, then it is He who must take the initiative. This Child grew up to be the Saviour of the World but, in this article, I would like to explore with you the birth of another child who also grew up to lead his people, not so much to eternal salvation, but certainly to freedom in a Promised Land.

Last month we left Jacob and his family moving to Egypt; in a sense, it was as though God had planted a seed into the Egyptian soil; the seed disappeared for a while and seemed to merge into the life of Egypt until, one day, a mother gave birth to a child who was given the name: Moses, a baby who was to grow up to be one of God's principal agents in His message to the world. His mother was named Jochebed from the tribe of Levi, one of the sons of Jacob.

Due to the ingenuity of his mother, Moses not only grew up as a Hebrew but also matured in the palace of Pharaoh, having been adopted by Pharaoh's daughter who had 'rescued' him from the waters of the Nile. Thus, he was equipped to fulfil the task God had prepared for him.

One day, Moses, having grown up and married, was shepherding some sheep and he came to a special place and saw the strange sight of a Burning Bush that was not being consumed by the flames; he turned aside and investigated and thereby he met with the living God who spoke to him from the Bush and called him to service. So often, this is how we meet with God; we turn aside from that which we are doing and our lives and purposes are changed, and we are called into service.

Moses was not a willing servant; he found all sorts of objections, as we all tend to do, but eventually he agreed to do what God had prepared for him. And just as well, for God had put a lot of effort into this man. In the course of his conversation with God speaking from the bush, Moses asks God's name; and God replies: 'I Am that I Am'; in other words, a present living God. And if we cast our minds forward to conversations with Jesus recorded in John's Gospel, we see Jesus identifying with this living God: *'before Abraham was, I Am'*.

Moses goes from the conversation at the Burning Bush to confrontations with Pharaoh that eventually lead to him bringing the Israelites out of Egypt in a journey towards the Promised Land.

Friendship through Faith

Malcolm Railton writes: I have been a member of CIFE, The Council for Inter Faith and Ethnic Relations which is a Diocesan task group for a number of years. Last Tuesday, 16th November, Glynis and I took part in an event entitled "Friendship through Faith", which involved visiting several places of worship in Newcastle. We met at the Sikh Gurdwara at 10am and boarded our coach. During the day we visited: the Orthodox Synagogue, the Anglican Cathedral, the Central Mosque, the Hindu Temple and finally returned to the Sikh Gurdwara.

As you can imagine there were people from all of these faith backgrounds on the coach and we all had a wonderful day exploring, learning, improving our understanding of one another, and making new friends. There were refreshments

along the way, and this made for a very pleasant day out. The importance of hospitality and particularly the sharing of food and drink came across as being very important to all faiths.

We were all relaxed in each other's company and there was a great sense of shared joy and companionship. We agreed on so many things and found much common ground, this makes it even more frustrating when some people spend their time looking for difference and dispute.

There was a universal feeling of positivity for our region and all of its people, and I found this to be inspiring and affirming. No-one was trying to 'convert' anyone else, we simply came together as people of faith, good and kind people, who are working for the good of all.

Desmond Tutu said, "God is not upset that Gandhi was not a Christian, because God is not a Christian! All of God's children and their different faiths help us to realise the immensity of God."

Interestingly, when I was at Minsteracres in October on my residential ministerial training weekend, one of the Catholic priests had quoted Gandhi in his sermon on the Sunday morning. He told me that Gandhi had said that all that was required for the whole world was the Beatitudes, Matthew 5: 1-12, and that if we followed that teaching, we would need no other.

- *When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:*
- *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
- *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*
- *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*
- *Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*
- *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*
- *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*
- *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- *Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely^[b] on my account.*
- *Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

When you reflect that here I had a Roman Catholic priest telling me what a Hindu had said about the words of Jesus, the whole notion of friendship in faith seems less unusual than inevitable. We share so much with our brothers and sisters of other faiths, and with those of no faith, we are all made in God's image, and we are all equal in His eyes.

The bishop and theologian, John Shelby "Jack" Spong wrote, "God is not a Christian, God is not a Jew, or a Hindu, or a Buddhist. All of those are human systems which human beings have created to try to help us walk into the mystery of God. I honour my tradition, I walk through my tradition, but I don't think my tradition defines God, I think it only points me to God."

God is greater, more wonderful, and more powerful than anything that I can even imagine. He is beyond my comprehension, so it would be extremely arrogant and stupid of me to limit God's capabilities by applying what I thought was right. The answer is simple, we must all love one another unconditionally, and until we do this, we will not be able to save God's world and all of His children.

Editors' note: *I hope that, like me, everyone who reads Malcolm's article above will go back and re-read it as it deserves. I see myself becoming increasingly Quaker in my beliefs – a Quaker with an addictive fondness for hymn-singing and a response to the theatre of liturgy and ritual. One of the elements that draws me to the theology of the Society of Friends is their core belief that "there is something of God in every man" – that somewhere in us there is a piece of spirituality which we can nourish and develop best in the love of God – by whatever name we may call our god. Thank you, Malcolm, for drawing out this truth in your article. The late Gerald Priestland, himself a Quaker, used to say that he saw God as a mountain top and that, like any mountain, there were dozens of ways to reach its top.*



Picture credit: Sebastien Goldberg, unsplash.com



DUST ON THE NEEDLE

A night of live music for dancing or listening, featuring your favourite songs from the 50s, 60s and 70s, with ones you'll remember, ones you'd forgotten and ones you might wish you had.....

[Ladies Handbags in the middle a prerequisite]

Performed by Me and My Shadow, the Belle
and Bucketees, AL-DI, The Grandads,
And featuring the wonderful Kerry Hays
Backed by our own House Band.

Holy Saviours Church Hall,

22nd January, 2022 7:00 – 10.00pm

Tickets £10.00 available after Morning

Service or from Holy Saviours Parish Office

Pay as you go Bar, Light Refreshments at the
interval, Raffle, and a Quiz

Bring your friends for a night of nostalgic
entertainment

THE NAME'S THE SAME

Holy Saviour's Church, Puxton, Somerset



The Church of the Holy Saviour, Puxton, Somerset was declared redundant in 2002, and is now in the hands of the Churches Conservation Trust. The church tower has been at this angle for nearly five hundred years. Its builders did not realise that the North Somerset Levels, that huge plain stretching from Bristol to Ilchester, is based intermittently on pockets of wet, peaty soil. The tower began to lean while it was being built, which is why it never reached its designated height.

One detail of the church's history that appealed to me was its role in measuring out plots for cultivation on a nearby common meadow. The church bells were rung, after which the plots were measured using a chain calibrated by the distance between the chancel arch and the west door in the church. Measured and labelled, plots were allocated by tenants drawing marked apples from a bag, the mark on an apple corresponding to a mark dug into the middle of the allocated plot. Once this had been done, the church bells were rung once more, and the proceedings concluded with a revel at the expense of the rector. Sometimes, it seems that useless knowledge of that sort is the only kind worth having.

SOUL MUSIC, RUGBY, FRANCOIS AND MADIBA

John Pearce writes: There are some radio programme format ideas that seem so obvious as to be almost forces of nature. First among these would be *Soul Music* [BBC Radio Four Extra recurring]. It's a programme which I prefer to listen to in private for the simple reason that if the music doesn't reduce me to a helpless puddle [which it usually does], the things that contributors say about it finish off the process of unmaning me. I still wonder what the people on that Metro carriage six or so years ago made of the elderly man sobbing helplessly in a corner seat as the South African national anthem, *Nkosi Sikelele Africa*, blazed through his earphones [look it up on https://youtu.be/wMqCKF_WHbw].

It didn't help either when, later in the programme Francois Pienaar testified to the power of the moment in 1995 when a mixed-race South African rugby team sang the new South African national anthem before a mixed-race South African crowd to honour the nation created in part by his hero Nelson Mandela. South African rugby players are not noted for being sentimental men, and so it is especially powerful to see and hear the love in Pienaar's voice when he speaks of Madiba.

It is interesting to compare the two men from the point of view of their origins. Francois Pienaar was born into a working-class Afrikaner family, a social class traditionally more fervent in support of *apartheid* than wealthier white South Africans. It is not difficult to see why: towards the lower end of social scale in *apartheid* South Africa, it must have been apparent to white Afrikaners that perhaps the only factor which separated them from the lowest class in their society was not intelligence, skill or merit, but the simple possession of a white skin. And if you had any intelligence at all [and Pienaar is an intelligent man] it would not take long to realise that possessing a white skin was something you had done nothing to deserve. The adult Pienaar's humility and openness suggests, at least to me, that perhaps this realisation took root in his mind at an early stage – which is perhaps why, when he won an athletic scholarship to the Rand Afrikaans University, he chose to study law.

Nelson Mandela, by contrast, was born into tribal African royalty, and had as privileged an upbringing and education as could be accessed by a black man at that stage of South Africa's development, institutionally racist as it then was. By 1953, the Johannesburg firm of Mandela and Tambo was the only African-run law practice in South Africa, although it was often the target of racist actions by police and government. His years of political activism, which included terrorism, are well documented, as are the machinations of the South African government that saw him locked up for twenty-eight years for a variety of [sometimes bogus] reasons.

But it is what happened in 1995, when the Springboks took on the Kiwis in the Rugby World Cup final in Johannesburg, that make us see the full flowering of the relationship between these two men initially separated by colour, class and race. I was conducting an orchestral concert the night that the match took place, and so I watched the recording the next day. It was a classic game, fiercely but sportingly contested. But now I remember nothing, save the joy of the mixed-race crowd, a crowd that would have been illegal five years before. But I do remember how moving it was to hear Francois Pienaar speak: it is impossible to improve on them.

“It’s just his presence, his being Madiba, his aura, his selflessness, his humility, that package is so powerful, it makes you feel you can run faster, that you can jump higher. And when he came to the final, I didn’t know that Madiba was going to be in our changing room, I didn’t know that. I was getting ready to play the biggest match of my life, and the door opened and in walked Madiba. And what did he wear? He wore the Springbok shirt, he had the Springbok on his heart....I couldn’t sing the anthem, I was incredibly emotional, the event was just...huge.”

“After the game, when we’d won, he came straight to me on the stage and he said to me ‘thank you for what you have done for South Africa’. I just couldn’t believe that he’d said that, and I said to him ‘thank you, Madiba, for what you have done for South Africa.’ ”

“The moment that he handed to me the trophy was an incredibly powerful moment, and when I lift the trophy, and look at the picture, and see Madiba and see the joy on his face, it’s incredibly emotional, it’s incredibly special, it’s very difficult to put it into words and to explain to people that this is the emotion that makes it worthwhile, and what it meant for the country. There was a reporter who stuck a microphone into my face right after the final whistle, and he said ‘how does it feel to win this game in front of 65,000 people?’ And I replied that it wasn’t in front of 65,000 people, it was in front of 43,000,000 people.”

“I remember the first time I saw him and how comfortable he made me feel, how special he made me feel; those would be my enduring thoughts on Madiba...how selfless he was, something I knew more about when I got to know him better: what he had to sacrifice, more than any of us can comprehend.”

In times like these, when sometimes it seems that all we can possess is hope, Nelson Mandela and Francois Pienaar are lights in our darkness. *Pax vobis cum.*

Copy for the January 2022 edition should be posted either to the Parish News Mailbox, or to JCPrintmail@gmx.co.uk by Thursday December 30th. Completed artwork will be sent to the printers overnight on Sunday January 2nd 2022 for publication in church on Saturday January 8th.

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



R. JOHNSON
FUNERAL DIRECTOR
[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

THIS SPACE TO LET
– it could be working
for you.

CONTACT
STUART CROZIER
PARISH
ADMINISTRATOR

ON 0191 257 6250

OR WRITE TO
office@holysaviours.org.uk

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

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

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

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



**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

**THIS
SPACE
TO
LET**

NORTHEAST BOILER CARE

Gas 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
 - Power Flushing

JONATHAN BENNETT – Gas Engineer



Tel: 0191 2846133
Mobile: 07713 242 814

Email: neboilercare@btinternet.com

Website: www.neboilercare.co.uk

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



GRAND PARADE, TYNEMOUTH, NE30 4ER

0191 293 6666 | WWW.GRANDHOTELTYNEMOUTH.CO.UK

EVENTS@GRANDHOTELTYNEMOUTH.CO.UK

Our local landmark to complement your church wedding. Once you've seen what we can offer, you'll not want to spend your special day anywhere else...

Located 0.4 miles away



WORSHIP AT CHURCH OF THE HOLY SAVIOUR

Sunday at 1000	Parish Eucharist
Sunday at 1800	Evening Prayer
Wednesday at 1000	Said Eucharist according to the Book of Common Prayer
Saturday at 0930	Prayer and Listening for Mission Prayer Meeting

Vicar Revd. Steve Dixon
Email vicar@holysaviours.org.uk
Telephone 07729 393 580
0191 697 4562
Curate Revd. Malcolm Railton
Email curate@holysaviours.org.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:

Janice Torpy, janicetorpy@gmail.com
Tel. Tel: 296 2462
Barbara Walker, 2 Monkstone Crescent,
Tel. 257 4159



Picture credit: Davies Design Studio: www.unsplash.com

ACTIVITIES

Mothers' Union

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

W3 – Women's Group

1 st Thursday	7.30	Parish Centre
Eleanor Hayward	Tel 0191 2571720	

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. 259 6236
--------------	---------------

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.