

# PARISH NEWS



**JUNE 2021**



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**CHURCH OF THE HOLY SAVIOUR, TYNEMOUTH**  
**[www.holysaviours.org.uk](http://www.holysaviours.org.uk)**

# June at Holy Saviours

[correct at the time of going to press – Tuesday, June 1st, 2021]

By the time this is read on Sunday June 6<sup>th</sup>, we will have been holding public worship for eight weeks, beginning on Easter Sunday. Using government and Church of England rulings we will continue to observe the following procedures:

- masks will be worn throughout services except for clergy, readers, singers and intercessors who may remove them while speaking or singing
- sanitising facilities will be available on entering and leaving the church
- social distancing – a two metre gap between worshippers – will continue to be observed, and our seating capacity is dictated by this: **it is ESSENTIAL that worshippers sit in the pews to which they are directed**
- although congregational singing is still forbidden, a group of three singers sitting in the chancel will sing two hymns at appropriate moments; the singing group has resumed its weekly meetings, and is making recordings of anthems to be used during communion at live-streamed worship
- social fellowship is permitted in the church gardens after the service, when groups of [maximum] six people [or two households] may meet and talk, social distancing rules being observed at all times
- Communion continues to be taken under one kind only, the use of a communal chalice still being suspended for the time being
- arrangements for Sunday and weekday services will continue to be published in Steve Dixon's weekly emails and any changes will be announced there first

For the time being we plan to continue services as follows:

**Sundays at 1000 and 1130:** Holy Communion

**Sundays at 1800:** Evening Prayer on Zoom – the Meeting ID is 932 5122 1332 and the Passcode is 932986

We will also continue to meet for **Coffee and Chat** on Wednesdays at 1100 on Zoom – the Meeting ID is 970 9701 3865, and the Passcode is 036447

**Please note** that you can dial in on a landline telephone to both the Zoom meetings above by ringing 0131 460 1196 and entering the Meeting ID number and Passcode number when prompted.

**And please remember that we are still dealing with a fluid and rapidly changing situation – keep an eye on our website, Steve's emails and church-porch notices.**



## THE VICAR WRITES.....

Though we humans might have been waiting for a break in the weather for some time, nature still gets on with it. No matter how many times I see it unfold, watching the plants and leaves revealing their beauty each Spring-time is always a joyous surprise. Life has a way of pushing through to the surface and singing glorious praises to God.

This feels to be in stark contrast to some of the conversations I have witnessed over the last few weeks about the state of the church. Talk with clergy colleagues and oecumenical partners – of shrinking congregations and worries about the sustainability of churches – have had a distinctly autumnal chill blowing through them. We can easily talk ourselves into a sense of defeat and despondency. There is a ring of truth about this outlook, but is it the whole picture? We may sometimes suspect that God has withdrawn from our society, but are we simply looking for God in the wrong places? St Paul reminds us,

*Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8.35-39)*

Can we question if God is present with us after reading this?

Between Ascensiontide and Pentecost over the last few years, we have been encouraged by our Archbishops to pray 'Thy Kingdom Come' as we ask that God, with spring-like vigour, should break into our world and reach out to those who don't yet know Jesus. It is good to have this encouragement at a special time of year, but should we not be doing this all the time? Our time spent going through the *Leading Your Church into Growth* programme highlighted that, in common with most churches, we do not place much emphasis on praying for mission. As a result, you may have noticed such prayer in our Sunday intercessions, and I would like to encourage more missional prayer.

It feels particularly pertinent at this time, as we slowly emerge from lockdown restrictions, that we wait on God to hear God's calling for us as individuals and a

church. In many ways, the lockdowns provided a chance to hit the reset button and do things differently, and we need God's guidance with this. To this end, a regular Saturday morning prayer meeting is being launched where we can listen to the way that God wants us to move us forward in mission. As we pray, I am sure we will discover the surprise of God's new life breaking through the surface in us and in our community, as surely as nature renews itself each spring.

*Steve*

**THIS MONTH ON SATURDAY JUNE 19<sup>th</sup>**



*Picture credit: Unsplash.com*

**Saturday Prayer Meeting  
in Holy Saviour's Church,  
9:30 – 10:00 every week**

## EDITORIAL

**John Pearce writes:** I meant this month to write about how, in our public discourse, lies are now an integral part of its vocabulary; we have learned to take deceit for granted. The most depressing thing I have read in the last two years was an *Associated Press* article about Boris Johnson by Jill Lawless. After listing a series of his journalistic misdemeanours, she went on to say this: ‘None of these gaffes has derailed his career. Tim Bale, professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London, said Johnson’s celebrity status means his untruths don’t harm him the way they would most politicians. “His reputation as someone who, let’s say, plays fast and loose with the truth is almost kind of priced in or baked in,” Bale said. “People just accept that that’s who he is. And they think, ‘Well, that’s Boris.’”

If that is true – and it probably is – then I think we have a great deal to fear from our political process in the coming years. We have grown used to political effrontery; that has been baked in, or priced in, to our politics – be they Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, UKIP or Monster Raving Loony – for years. Dominic Cummings’s astonishing performance in front of the Commons Health, Science and Technology Select Committee, is merely the latest example to hand. The lack of self-awareness his testimony demonstrated struck me as almost pathological. Only a year ago, Mr Cummings fobbed off the public with an account of his Barnard Castle escapade that was about as genuine as a seven-pound note. Now he expects us to take as gospel a series of allegations serious enough, if proven, to lead to criminal charges. Whether his testimony is true or not – and time will tell us that – matters much less than the fact that, even with his dubious track record, *he expects us to believe that it is*. It would have been gratuitously offensive for a member of the Select committee to have asked Mr Cummings if he would consider buying a bottle of hair-restorer from a bald man – but I rather wish someone had. We can work with baked-in effrontery, then; should we also be expected to accept baked-in, or, more precisely, priced-in, deceit?

Which was as far as I had got when I read, in this morning’s *Times*, an obituary of a man of whom I have never heard, a Dutchman called Jan Bras, who died in May at the age of 98. Mr Bras was born in Java, which was then part of the Dutch East Indies in 1922 to colonial Dutch parents. His deer-hunting father taught him to shoot when he was only eight years old, but after he killed a bird of paradise he felt so guilty that he confessed his sin at his First Communion. The priest scolded him for confessing such a “triviality”: thereafter, his Catholicism faltered and died.

Mr Bras was a private in the Netherlands Colonial Army when the Japanese invaded Indonesia in 1941. His father, Johannes, was captured by the Japanese and murdered; soldiers forced a tube down his throat and pumped water into it

until his stomach ruptured, an act of sadism that Bras was never able to fathom. When the Netherlands Army surrendered in 1942, Jan in his turn was captured along with his brother Gerrit, a doctor in the army medical corps, and joined the thousands of prisoners set to work on the infamous Burma railway along the River Kwai. The horrors of that epic of human misery are perhaps better recalled in brief glimpses: Jan's watching his best friend die, the mock-execution of Gerrit, all of the prisoners being made to dig their own graves in advance of their own presumably forthcoming deaths. 13,000 prisoners died during the three and a half years of his imprisonment, along with 100,000 native slave-labourers – it was said that each sleeper laid on the Burma railway track-bed cost a human life.

The Japanese retreat from Indonesia brought no relief; prisoners were shipped to the island of Kyushu and set to work in the notoriously unsafe coalmines of Fukuoka, where many died in tunnel collapses. Jan owed his survival largely to his brother, the camp doctor, making him his medical orderly, but even that guaranteed little. Once, having not bowed sufficiently deeply to a prison guard, Jan was beaten black and blue. It is not surprising that, come the Japanese surrender, many prisoners took their chance to execute summary justice on their captors; but from this revenge, Jan Bras stood aside. The closest he came to sharing these deplorable but understandable feelings was when, on his way to take ship back to Europe, he passed through the ruins of Nagasaki. He described a landscape which was "completely black. Here and there, there was a chimney. All the houses were just stone and rubble. And I thought, 'good for the Americans.'"

His later life – qualifying as a doctor in the Netherlands, emigrating to Jamaica, marrying there a Scottish doctor called Annabelle Duguid, and eventually settling with her and his family in Wrexham, where he spent the rest of his life working as an NHS ophthalmologist – was as unremarkable as the first twenty five years had been extraordinary. He spoke little of his imprisonment, although it left him with "an almost debilitating awareness of other people's pain. In later life he could not even bring himself to swat a fly". He was ninety-two by the time he allowed the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder to emerge, and although by then therapists could do little except listen, he found it helpful to share those terrible experiences, even though they could neither comprehend nor mitigate them.

*"Men have bled where no wounds were":* for Mr Bras, the living of a productive, quotidian professional and family life after a war filled with unimaginable suffering was perhaps his greatest heroism, not least for its being sustained for so long. He is someone to bear in mind next time we are inclined to feel sorry for ourselves, or feel irritated at the bloated self-regard of many of those set in authority over us, and their systematic rewritings of history to nourish and preserve that self-regard. They show us one side of humanity, Jan Bras another. I know which I prefer.

## Notes and News

### WHAT PRICE THE *PARISH NEWS*?

**The Editor writes:** At last month's PCC meeting, it was agreed unanimously that, from September 2021, the monthly cover price of the *Parish News* will be increased to £1.50. Current subscribers who renewed their subscriptions in April this year will be charged a yearly rate of £15 when their subscriptions fall due in April 2022. This is of course a significant increase, and in part reflects the fact that the *News* has been sold at £1.00 monthly for as long as I can remember. From that point of view it could be said that a price increase is overdue. More to the point is what I hope to do with the extra income [which will average out to about £50 per month]. This is to commission more colour printing in the *News*. Currently we are allowed one colour page a month and we use this to create a colourful and eye-catching cover. I am always happy to print photographs, but I can't be the only one who thinks that printing them in grayscale instead of colour robs them of much of their impact. The price increase will, in short, be used to make the *News* a more attractive read.

I also took to the PCC meeting the idea that perhaps we need to consider the future of the *Parish News* in terms of our church mission. At the moment, the *News* reaches one hundred and fifty households in our parish and a further ten families by post. Thus, about three hundred Tynemouth people read the *Parish News*, which implies that about five and a half thousand of them don't. A church magazine is, by definition, an in-house publication: but it seems to me that it is also a classic example of the church's preaching to the choir, a habit which, if allowed to endure, will eventually ensure that the choir is your only audience.

Which raises a series of questions about the role of the *Parish News* in our mission, and how it could be developed the more effectively to serve that end. If money were no object, then we could, for example, deliver a free copy of the current publication to every household in the parish; however, it is, so we can't. On the other hand, we could issue a quarterly bulletin in the form of an A5 leaflet to two thousand households for less than £250 a year, and perhaps this is something we could consider. After all, if our progress out of the covid restrictions proceeds smoothly [perhaps a much bigger if than many people seem to imagine], then one of the things we must do is to announce that we are open again to the whole of the parish [most of which, it is fair to say, may not have noticed that we have been closed in the first place]. This is only one idea among several which could see our church publications play a stronger role in our mission, a mission which seems to me to be more vitally necessary than ever. Any more ideas?

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Chris Benneworth writes:** As we hope to get back to something resembling normality, the social sub-committee has made plans for a number of events for the church and the wider community, including:

- **a self-guided walk** through Tynemouth on the theme of “Pleasure and Punishment” – coming soon
- **afternoon tea** in the church grounds – to coincide with the *National Day of Thanksgiving* – Sunday July 4th from 2:30 onward
- **Jigsaw Competition** – we hope to schedule this for the week commencing 9th October, if pandemic restrictions have been sufficiently eased by then
- **Quiz** – during the early autumn, date to be arranged
- **Autumn Fair** – Saturday 20th November.
- **Christmas Tree Festival** – Tuesday 14th to Thursday 16th December; this will culminate in an evening of Christmas stories and songs
- **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December at 6.00 pm** – Festival of Lessons and Carols

And, in the pipeline for 2022 we can look forward to:

- **Dust on the Needle II** – January
- **Murder Mystery evening** – February
- **Old-time Music Hall** – March

Clearly, much will depend on the easing of restrictions on numbers, and on our being able to gather together safely. The dates above are therefore provisional, but we are looking forward to the future with hope and confidence.



Picture credit: Basil James, Unsplash.com



## BILL MILLS AT 100



*Picture Credit: Timothy Duff*

**Timothy Duff writes:** Longer-standing members of Holy Saviour's will remember Bill, who was much involved in parish life here until he moved to Norham, on the banks of the River Tweed, about twenty five years ago. Patricia and I took the opportunity to visit Bill in May, when we were on holiday at Embleton, which is just over halfway in distance to Norham from Tynemouth.

Bill lives on his own in a very comfortable bungalow, with assistance including a delightful domestic help Margaret, whom we met. He looks after his garden himself, though he does not walk very well or far at all these days, and the garden was in fine shape. For a centenarian, Bill was in fine shape too. Physically he may have slowed down, but mentally there is no slowing down at all. He continues to be in contact with a number of Holy Saviour's folk.

We learned about his early life, growing up on the Welbeck Abbey Estate, then moving with his mother to Sheffield after his father's early death. Work brought him to Tyneside in 1948, and his long involvement in Holy Saviour's life began. This included leadership in the Scout Group, training, then being licensed, as a Reader, membership of the PCC and being Parish Treasurer.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit; it was very good to catch up with Bill.

## **BISHOP ANDREW ALEXANDER KENNY GRAHAM, RIP (BISHOP ALEC) 1929-2021**

**The Diocesan Communications Office writes:** It is with sadness that we inform you of the death of Bishop Alec Graham on Sunday 9th May, 2021. Bishop Alec died at his home in Butterwick on Sunday morning, supported by the excellent care of those who have provided him with 24 hour nursing care over the last few years. Bishop Alec, having previously been Suffragan Bishop of Bedford, was appointed Diocesan Bishop in 1981 and served the Diocese until his retirement in 1997. He was passionate about the education of young people and also served as Chair of the Doctrine Commission. He was much loved by many throughout his time in Newcastle. He had a deep love of the Northumberland countryside and was often seen hill walking in the Cheviots accompanied by Zillah, his Golden Labrador. Bishop Alec's funeral, at his request, was private, taking place on 26th May. He also requested that there were to be no memorial services. However, many people might wish to set aside some time to remember him before God with thanksgiving for everything that he gave to the wider Church and to this Diocese in particular. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

**David Littlefield writes:** Bishop Alec was the epitome of a good Christian who walked the walk, often in difficult circumstances. He usually spent each Christmas day doing prison visits, and he was always ready to deal with those on the margins of society. He did his very best to mediate with those caught up in the unfortunate riots which occurred on the Meadowell Estate in North Shields some years ago. I remember him being interviewed on BBCTV *Look North* urging conciliation and positive action. I like to think this once troubled area is relatively calm partly because of the positive action from Bishop Alec amongst others. Although relatively small in stature he had an immense heart and was not afraid to confront the less popular issues of the day. On a more light-hearted note I well remember him preaching at Richard Taylors Induction and simply scattering his notes over the pulpit as he went along. He was a true character and a memorable one. We are the poorer for his passing.

## **MALCOLM SOULSBY'S 365 CHALLENGE - UPDATE**

**The Editor writes:** By the time this is read, Malcolm will be within sight of completing his epic daily journey through a year of daily music-making. Every day since June 15<sup>th</sup> 2020, he has played and recorded a piece of organ music and uploaded it to the Holy Saviours Music Facebook page. Many of us have made requests for him to play especial favourites or pieces dedicated to family and friends, and sponsored him to do so. It has been an absolute joy [during a year

notably short on joy] to follow Malcolm’s musical odyssey, which has covered four centuries and [by my rough calculation] somewhat over a hundred composers. His music-making has been for us a daily oasis of spirituality, and I have been personally especially touched by the loving care he devoted to a series of requests honouring birthdays in my family, both living and *in memoriam*. The 365 Challenge has also raised money for church funds, and on May 26<sup>th</sup>, the total stood at £835 which, given that many donations have been Gift-Aided, comes to £1022.50p – a wonderful financial achievement to complement his musical one. Malcolm’s enterprise, musicianship and dedication give us much to be thankful for.



Picture credit: unsplash.com

## THIS MONTH'S COVER

**The Editor writes:** The idea of the fruit of the spirit originates in the epistle to the Galatians, chapter five: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”* Like a lot of Biblical texts, it is often adjusted to provide a particular emphasis, or to modernise possibly dubious translations. Coverdale’s first English Bible combined direct translations from St Paul’s original Greek with secondary source translations from Latin and German – and a great deal has happened to the English language since 1535. Which may be why, in our cover picture, for instance, mercy replaces kindness in St Paul’s original, whilst goodness is rendered as integrity. St Jerome, in the Latin Bible we know as the Vulgate, adds three more – long-suffering, modesty and chastity – which may have reflected his own preoccupations as much as they did St Paul’s. Either way, an individual [or a church] living out a life nourished by the fruit of the spirit would have much to teach the rest of the world.

# GOING FOR GREEN: A PARISH ENVIRONMENT CHAMPION

**The Editor writes:** I was contacted last month by Bethany Hume, Assistant Secretary of the Diocese of Newcastle, who wrote to me in my capacity as PCC Secretary to ask if I would be willing to share with our PCC an opportunity for someone to volunteer as a Parish Environment Champion for our parish. Accordingly I took the matter to last month's PCC, where it was agreed to use the *Parish News* to float the idea.

The Diocese is seeking an enthusiastic volunteer from each parish to act as a **Parish Environment Champion**. The task of the champion will be to highlight environmental issues as they affect individual churches and congregations, and to help them in fulfilling God's command to care for creation. Historically, this idea dates back to a proposition tabled at General Synod in February 2019 when [by a vote of 279 *pro* to 3 *con*], the church resolved to

- recognise the escalating threat to God's creation from global warming and climate change, and the suffering caused, particularly to the poor;
- develop Shrinking the Footprint (StF) to enable the whole Church to address the issue of climate change;
- call on every Diocese to have an environment programme with a designated member of the Bishop's staff team to lead and advocate for the programme
- rapidly accelerate the Church of England Environmental Programme especially regarding energy use and carbon dioxide emissions
- make tools for energy and carbon dioxide emissions checks by churches and church halls to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 80% by 2050
- promote peer review between Dioceses regarding investments, property and land use

Revd Mark Nash-Williams was accordingly appointed as Bishop's Adviser on the Environment for Newcastle, and his ideas about how the Parish Environment Champion would perform in post are set out below.

*"It is recommended that each Parish nominates an individual as their environmental champion who will also act as a point of contact with their Deanery Environment Champion. The role of Environmental Champion is very useful and important to help your church become greener and more sustainable. It can be helpful to have a nominated person who ensures that environmental issues are*

*championed. This should never mean that the rest of the congregation may assume that they don't have to think about caring for the creation.*

**Role** *The task of a Parish Environment Champion is to help their church and congregation in fulfilling God's command to care for the creation – in the practical context of the parish and church. Activities and concerns which a church is encouraged to engage with – supported by its Environmental Champion/group – may include:*

- *participating in Eco Church.*
- *working towards becoming a carbon neutral church*
- *environmental campaigning and action e.g. events reaching out to the local community*
- *raising awareness of issues such as low-carbon travel, recycling, and biodiversity*
- *encouraging and promoting lifestyle changes*
- *considering how our churches, vestries and offices, halls etc. can become more sustainable*
- *cutting energy and carbon, water use and waste*
- *caring for wildlife and ecology in the churchyard*
- *Encouraging your church's use of food to be LOAF: local, organic, animal-friendly and Fairtrade*

**Are there any Requirements?** *No prior knowledge is necessary; however, Parish Environment Champions should be interested in the environment, be enthusiastic about the role and have good communication skills.*

**Parish Environmental Policy** *Every parish is also encouraged to write an environmental policy, in line with the policy of the Diocesan Synod. A template is available on the environment web-pages of the Newcastle Diocesan website. In beginning to think about a parish environmental policy, you need to remember that we can't do everything at once. What will your Church prioritise first? What is most important or will have the greatest impact? It may be helpful to get a group of volunteers to form a group, or to work with your PCC to set achievable goals.*

**Appointment** *The appointment of this role should be made by the PCC (or DCC). This helps ensure that the actions the Environment Champion and/or environment group makes have the backing of the wider church, congregation and leadership. The first step is to look through the bullet list above and to agree the initial points to work through within your church's context. Do remember to consider the scope of the role, and how others will be asked to get involved. It is advisable to set a*

time limit for the role. Whatever the expectation, the commitment should be clearly communicated. This in turn will help the appointee make good strategic long term aims and decisions.

**More information** You are not on your own; there are lots of tools and resources for your church available through the environment web-pages of the Newcastle Diocesan website and the Church of England Environment Programme. For more information get in touch with the Diocesan Environment team: The Revd Mark Nash-Williams by email at [Environment@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:Environment@newcastle.anglican.org) or with Bethany Hume at [b.hume@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:b.hume@newcastle.anglican.org). If you would like to know more about Eco Church or the Parish Environment Champions visit our [Environment: Getting Started](#) page for parishes.

If you are interested in the role of Parish Environment Champion then please, in the first instance, contact John Pearce, in his role as PCC Secretary, at [heljon@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:heljon@blueyonder.co.uk), on 0191 291 2742 or on 07903 227 192. It would be useful to hear from a volunteer by the middle of June, so that the matter can be progressed at the next meeting of the PCC on Monday June 21<sup>st</sup>.

## SONGS OF PRAISE



Picture credit – Michael Maasen, unsplash.com

**John Pearce writes:** As detailed on page nine above, Malcolm Soulsby's year-long organ recital will come to an end next week, on Tuesday June 15<sup>th</sup>. After a suitable interval for his fingers and feet to recover, and bearing in mind that for the foreseeable future congregational hymn-singing will not be allowed in our services, the singing group has agreed to support a scaled down version of the 365 *Challenge*, this time using favourite hymns requested by the congregation. For a donation, large or small, to church funds, we will record on video any hymn from *Hymns Old and New* and post the recording on the Holy Saviours Music Facebook page. If you would like to take part in this project then proceed as follows:

- by email – [heljon@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:heljon@blueyonder.co.uk) or post – 9 Selwyn Avenue, Monkseaton, NE25 9DH or telephone – 0191 291 2742– send me your requests, together with any dedication you wish to make
- you will be notified of the date when your video will be posted – we will record perhaps two hymns per week at our Wednesday practices, so there may be a delay of a week or two between request and performance
- make your donation to church funds – using BACS is the easiest way: sort code 55-81-19, account number 08010323, using the reference *Songs of Praise*

## BIBLICAL WORDS [XIII]:

### 'Who mind earthly things' (Philippians 3 v 19)

**Clive Harper writes:** This is a strange expression and challenging to us all; do we, do I mind earthly things? I fear I do. The language is that of the King James Bible; today we might say: 'whose minds are set on earthly things' but however we say it, it is no less challenging. Are our minds set on earthly things; and, if they are, does it matter? St Paul the Apostle certainly thought it does and he was forthright in spelling out his thoughts in his letter to the young Church in Philippi.

What does it mean, anyway, for our minds to be set on earthly things? what to eat today? what to wear? what about the fortunes of my football team? how can I earn more money? Where shall we go on holiday? who shall I vote for? Perhaps St Paul is not thinking so much of these things, but rather of those people who go out of their way to steal and rob and cheat and pillage; not thinking of others but only themselves: whose God, as St Paul graphically says: is their belly!

But as I pondered this matter, I reflected that we live in a world which is always pressing in on us; things are happening all the time; the news (mainly bad) regales us with stories of war and fighting, disagreements, disputes and disease; we can so easily get caught up in it all; and sometimes it is right that we should. But, in this world there are so many things that clamour for our attention and all of us are tempted by them: the gods of this age want us to concentrate on them, and the headlines jostle as they seek our favour.

And then I remembered that at my baptism into the Christian faith, accepted at the time of my confirmation, I enlisted to fight against the world, as well as sin and the devil; to resist the pull of the world as I travel through it. And the words of a hymn came into mind: 'Jesus calls us from the worship of this vain world's golden store; from each idol that would keep us, saying, 'Christian love me more'.

So, it seems that it has to be a matter of choice, of priority, of master and servant; in the end we have to decide where our values lie. Of course, we are all individuals, in often vastly different circumstances, and doubtless God takes all of this into account; but He has given us the freedom to decide, even as He provides for all our needs, in this wonderful, wonderful world, if only we can see it.

I have memories, from years ago, of a friend speaking about his late father who was devoted to classical music. He said to me: "As my father lay dying, I asked him if he wanted me to play some music; but it seems that even his favourite music was not enough, he was about something greater than that." We, too, are about something greater than that; nothing less than the salvation of our eternal souls.

**"And they said unto Him, teach us how to pray...."**

**Malcolm Railton writes:** It is something we are told to do, we know that we should do, and often we would like to do. So, why don't we all pray more regularly?

I am not going to reel off a list of excuses and how we are too busy, because most of us are fairly good at making up our own excuses for not doing something. Perhaps, there are other reasons involved when it comes to our reluctance to pray regularly.

Do we feel self-conscious, do we feel that we are not particularly good at it, do we need help? I know that all of these have applied to me, and sometimes still do.

It is about nine years since I first spoke to my parish priest regarding my thoughts of ministerial training and vocation. Unluckily for you, the good folk of Tynemouth, he encouraged me, and my current journey began. However, from this time onwards, I have prayed the Daily Office, morning and evening prayer, everyday except for about half a dozen. Perhaps the greatest joy of praying this way is the knowledge that whatever time of day or night you choose to pray, someone, somewhere in the worldwide Anglican Communion, and probably many other people will be praying the same words simultaneously.

Ministers in the church are expected to follow this routine, and initially it took some planning. You need a copy of the lectionary, a Bible, and a daily prayer book (either *Common Worship* or *The Book of Common Prayer*); it requires a bit of planning and organisation.

Or at least it did. But now, as for a number of years, *Morning Prayer*, *Evening Prayer*, and *Night Prayer* or *Compline*, have been available on-line or as an App from the Church of England. There is now an audio accompaniment with Morning and Evening Prayer, so you are no longer sitting talking to yourself. If you read



morning and evening prayer every day, you will read all of the appointed lectionary readings from the Bible in a year, and all of the Psalms every month. If you only followed one or the other, it would obviously take a little longer.

It still amazes me how often one or more of the readings seems really relevant to my situation. It is almost as if the Bible is a living and relevant book, and someone is watching over me. Who would have thought it?

So, how can we all get access to this wonderful resource provided by the Church of England? Use whichever device you choose. I have them installed on my iPad and my mobile phone, so I always have easy access to them and there is no need to carry three books. As follows:

- Go the CofE website: [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org)
- Scroll down the homepage: you will see a heading *Begin a daily habit of prayer*.
- There are two options, *Time to Pray app and podcast* and *Daily Prayer app and podcast*.
- *Time to Pray* consists of prayer during the day and Night Prayer.
- *Daily Prayer* consists of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer.
- Select the option that suits you (I have both, they are free) and follow the procedure to download the app on android or ios.

Whichever you choose you can select which prayers you use and when you use them. I am not expecting anyone to use them all every day; use whatever fits into your life, and whatever you feel that you need. If you have any technical questions ask Steve, [seriously - ask Steve or me]. If not, one of your grandchildren will sort it out for you in about two minutes.

Good luck with your prayers, I know that I find the guided prayer and the routine really helpful and feel part of something bigger.

**Editor's note:** Malcolm refers to the serendipity of a scheduled bible passage speaking directly to his condition. Looking for a suitable title for his helpful and thoughtful article, I found that sometimes serendipity works for editors too. The whole notion of how prayers are answered [even when they seem to have been ignored] is contained in this quotation by Soren Kierkegaard: "*Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays.*" And the next quotation to that one was this powerful and beautiful Islamic prayer. Prayers like this speak directly, I think, to thoughtful people of all faiths and, for that matter, to those of none: "*Enlighten what is dark in me. Strengthen what is weak in me. Mend what is broken in me. Bind what is bruised in me. Heal what is sick in me. Straighten what is crooked in me. Revive whatever peace and love died in me.*"

## A WORLD WAR II RED CROSS PARCEL

4 oz (110 g) packet of tea	Tin of sardines or herrings
Tin of jam	Tin of cocoa powder
Tin of margarine	Bar of chocolate
Tin of sugar	Tinned sponge pudding
Tin of vegetables	Tin of meat roll
Tin of biscuits	Tin of processed cheese
Bar of soap	Tin of condensed milk
Tin of 50 cigarettes	Tin of dried egg

**Editor's note:** *The above list of the typical contents of a Red Cross parcel sent to British prisoners of war during World War II is provided to give some context to the engaging reminiscence that follows. It's interesting to note that Sheila's apparently instinctive urge to help others began early.*

**Sheila Park writes:** I was reading an obituary of a decorated retired army officer in the Telegraph, which was illustrated with a photograph of the label of one of the Red Cross parcels he had received during the Second World War. This brought back memories back of raising money for these parcels.

I was ten years old in 1942, when there was a lot of publicity in the local newspaper urging people to raise money to help the Red Cross provide these parcels. They cost 10/6d each [55 pence today]. With two friends, Betty and Pat, I was suddenly fired up with the idea of raising some money – but how? Resources were rather limited, pocket money ran to about 1/- a week [5p], and there were few things to buy for young children, but somehow we would try to have a little stall of goods to sell outside one of our houses.

The obvious choice was Betty's house; she lived in a detached corner house to what was then St Joseph's Roman Catholic church in Wallsend Road, North Shields. This was beside the Meadowell estate [then called The Ridges], and quite a few children came round that corner.

What we had on that stall I cannot quite remember – second hand books, comics, marbles, dolls' clothes – I don't know, but we managed to raise just over 17/- [85p]. We were elated – this was enough for one and a half parcels. But where to take the money?

The next day we set off for North Shields and went to the *Evening News* office in Nile Street. We were treated very politely, and directed to the home of Mrs Barbara Douglas of Jackson Street and so on we marched. It was a huge house – years later I realised that it was St Augustin's Church Vicarage and that Mrs Douglas was the vicar's wife. She invited us into the vicar's study, thanked us so

much and was so kind that we returned home determined to have a bigger effort next time. Not only would we have a stall at Betty's house, but also we would put on a show at the same time. As Betty's house had a wide side path and some land behind it, we decided we could have seats and be able to emerge from the garden shed in our costumes.

We based our show on a dance routine we had seen in a Hollywood film<sup>1</sup> starring Paulette Goddard and Veronica Lake [someone must remember them]. Veronica Lake had long blonde hair and, as Pat was fair, she took Veronica Lake's part.

I don't think the show was very good, but as Betty's mother [obviously a very patient lady] came out with cups of watery orange squash and biscuits, our audience was more or less satisfied. I cannot remember how much we charged, but we made just over £2/0/0 – we were even more elated. I think we had a third sale a few weeks later, but we didn't have much to sell, and the local children weren't interested any more, and so we made just enough for one more parcel.

Children in those days were very useful as messengers, as no-one had a telephone, and so we were sent off in all directions to take messages to someone's aunt, or grandparents, and my mother never seemed to worry where I had been. Of course there was very little traffic, but there was a war on, and the shipyards and naval installations were targets for the Luftwaffe. It certainly was a different world.

**Editor's note:** *It is always gratifying to receive contributions which have been stimulated by previously published contributions to the Parish News. And so it is a pleasure to print not only one but two pieces in this line this month.*

## WHAT MIGHT THE NEW LIFE OF ETERNITY BE?

**Timothy Duff writes:** Clive Harper's article 'Could you not watch with me, one hour?' in the May Parish News was an insightful and helpful development from Jesus's question to his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane to thoughts on time, then through a Good Friday service of the Last Hour before the Cross to Jesus in the tomb, a place of transformation and so to new life.

A new life which is, as Clive says, full of infinite possibilities. We must all have wondered what eternity may be, or, to put it in simple terms, what happens when we die? The truth is no-one knows, though some claim that they do. We should,

---

<sup>1</sup> This was possibly *I Wanted Wings*, in which Veronica Lake starred as a night club hostess. The only other Veronica Lake film of 1941, *Hold Back the Dawn*, a torrid and rather daring yarn about a Mexican gigolo, would have been wildly unsuitable for a well brought up ten-year-old girl, and doesn't seem to have featured much dancing either.

however, remember that we can have the beginnings of eternal life now in our relationship with God. In St. John's Gospel, chapter 17, verse 3, Jesus says: *'And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent'*. The most I can say is that I believe that some part of us, our soul, the spark of eternity in us, continues in God's closer presence.

Our essential difficulty in thinking and speaking about death and eternity is that we only have human concepts, human thoughts and words to use. They are never enough, but they are all we have. When we contemplate death, we are dealing in God's terms, which are always beyond our full understanding.

So it is that when we speak reminiscently about a person who has died, we sometimes visualise what they might be doing, based on their earthly life and characteristics. We might say of someone who liked a flutter on the horses 'He'll be placing a bet on the 2.30 in the Heavenly Betting Office on Saturday'. We know that can't be true, but it is our way of relating to that person and to eternity.

That set me to thinking – how might I be thought of? What might people say? In some ways, I prefer not to know! However, my life has been one of constant busyness, always with something to do. I seem either to have looked for new challenges or else they have come along uninvited. Assuming therefore that I do get to the Pearly Gates, might something on these lines fit the bill? St. Peter will be on duty and will say "Ah Timothy. Just the man we're looking for. Come in, we've got a job for you". A place of perfect peace and rest? Not for you, my lad!

All this reminded me of a poem I wrote one All Saints' Day when Pat and I were in Montreal. Winter had come early, and snow was swirling around.

### **All Saints' Day 1993**

Chill morning wind blows wintry snow  
On busy working saints below.  
But what of those who are above  
And nearer to the God of Love?  
Is theirs a life forever blest  
With never-ending sun and rest?  
Or work they too, at praise and prayer,  
And so we join with them, and there?

How do you envisage eternity? And thank you, Clive, for putting my little grey cells to work.



## PUBLISH OR PERISH?

**Ian Buxton writes:** We are fortunate indeed to have John Pearce as our Parish News editor, with his thought provoking pieces. In addition to his basic erudition, he is willing to spend hours scouring the internet to deepen our understanding, or maybe provoke our exasperation.

But I liked John's quoting of "Alice in Wonderland" to challenge the impenetrable jargon to which we are all subjected today. Which prompts another question: does the Emperor actually have any clothes? As a retired lecturer [although I rarely so described myself, preferring to state my profession as naval architect], my lecturing workload was many times higher than colleagues in arts disciplines, who felt hard done by if they had to give more than one or two lectures a week (and yet we were all paid the same). Our engineering students (like the medical and dental students) had contact hours (lectures and laboratories) massively greater than arts students, so may have considered their university time of better value, since the fees they were paying were the same.

Which brings me on to the point as to why we are subjected to torrents of impenetrable verbiage and articles from academics with time on their hands, namely the principle of *Publish or Perish*. You do not get recognition or promotion in academia without a publication list as long as your arm. [After 40 years, mine barely reached my elbow, but I was always more interested in practising than preaching about my work.] So that means they have to invent ever more abstruse topics and concepts to get their name into print - and the editors and readers of the journals they publish in are all playing the same game.

By the way, like John, I was surprised to learn how many books the Duke of Edinburgh had, especially on religious subjects.

**PS: The Editor writes:** I have a lot of time for Ian's disdain for the effects of the "publish or perish" principle in the humanities. I have read – or begun to read – a great deal of overwritten and over-wrought nonsense in the fields of literature and musicology. At the same time, we should note that it was a scientist, Alan Sokal, who hoaxed both the scientific and humanities communities with his 1995 paper published in *Social Text*, a periodical published by the prestigious Duke University: *Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity*. In this paper, Dr Sokal, a professor of physics at University College London and the University of New York, posited the notion that the scientific realities of physics are purely a social and linguistic construct. Such a notion is, of course, plain daft, recalling George Orwell's remark that "only an intellectual could possibly believe such a thing – no ordinary person would be so

stupid". Nonetheless, no-one in either field spotted the hoax until Dr Sokal revealed it himself – a fact of which neither community ought to be proud. But don't take my word for it: sample Dr Sokal's paper and make your own mind up:

*"The concept of an external world whose properties are independent of any individual human being is a dogma imposed by the long post-Enlightenment hegemony over the Western intellectual outlook. It is becoming increasingly apparent that physical reality is fundamentally a social and linguistic construct. ... Because scientific research is inherently theory-laden and self-referential, it cannot assert a privileged epistemological status with respect to counter-hegemonic narratives emanating from dissident or marginalized communities... ....therefore a liberatory science and an emancipatory mathematics, spurning the elite caste canon of "high science", needs to be established for a postmodern science providing powerful intellectual support for the progressive political project."*

You read it here first!

## BOOK REVIEW: EMPIRELAND, by SATHNAM SANGHERA

"Returning to the **bungalow** through the **jungle**, she threw her **calico** bonnet on the **teak** table, put on her **gingham** apron and slipped into a pair of **sandals**. There was the **tea caddy** to fill, the **chutney** to prepare for the **curry**, **pepper** and **cheroots** to order from the **bazaar** – she would give the houseboy a **chit**. The children were out in the **dinghy**, and their **khaki dungarees** would be wet. She needed a **shampoo**, and she never had finished those **chintz** hangings for the **verandah**. Ah well, she didn't really give a **dam**, and, putting a **shawl** around her shoulders, she poured herself a **punch**."

The passage above [from the book *Pax Britannica* by Jan Morris] contains one hundred and six words; and before reading on, ask yourself and ponder for a moment – what is the significance of the twenty one words which have been printed in bold type?

The answer is that all of them are words of Indian origin which have become part of the English language. And although this passage has obviously been contrived to make the point that the language of empire has made its way into the vocabulary which is the currency of our intelligence and communication, I daresay that most of you [like me] failed to spot more than half a dozen of them. Who knew, for example, that "giving a damn" actually referred originally to giving a *dumri*, a coin worth one-fortieth of a rupee, which, through elision in speech, became giving a *dam* and entirely understandably also became confused with the English word *damn*, itself originally derived from the Latin *damnare*, meaning loss or damage. It is perhaps no surprise to discover that the exotic sounding

mulligatawny soup was originally a Sri Lankan dish [in Tamil *milagu-tannir*, or pepper-water]. But how many people who enjoying drinking India Pale Ale know why it is called that? or why the Walton Breck Road end terrace at Anfield Road football ground was known as the Kop? And that is before we visit other former colonies to borrow their toboggans, run away from their zombies, or find out why cashmere is still classed as a luxury material from which to make pullovers.

It is a measure of Sathnam Sanghera's skill as a writer that he begins his book with this array of fascinating and exotic information which draws the reader into his wider narrative. He then uses his own experience as a British Sikh, as well as a panorama of eclectic and scholarly research, to offer an account of why the British empire defined not only much of what this country was from the seventeenth century onwards but also shapes much of what it is today and what it is likely to become. He is also admirably frank about the point of view from which he writes. He was born in Wolverhampton in 1976 to parents who had emigrated from their home in the Punjab in 1968, and who later brought his grandparents to live with them here. He is therefore, British first and foremost, something which he defines in his waspish dismissal of the phrase "second-generation immigrant" – "how can you be an immigrant to a country in which you were born?" He grew up in a town poisoned by a social atmosphere in large part contrived by the late Enoch Powell – as a small boy he remembers hiding, with dozens of other Sikh families, in the local *gurdwara* to be safe from the local chapter of the National Front on their way to see Wolves at Molineux Park. Nor is he sparing about the irony of the fact that the politician who oversaw the 1951 Tory government scheme to recruit colonial citizens for the NHS was none other than the then Minister of Health, that same Enoch Powell [the political hero, incidentally, of Nigel Farage].

All of which might suggest that Mr Sanghera has an axe to grind rather than holding a point of view. In fact, *Empireland* is a remarkably fair-minded book given the relationship of author to subject matter. He traces the history of the British Empire as [like the Crusades] a world-wide commercial joint-stock enterprise with political consequences which turned it into a set of beliefs – beliefs at their worst epitomised by admonitions such as "You are an Englishman, and thus have won first prize in the lottery of life". Cecil Rhodes may or may not have said that: but these next remarks of his are a matter of record: "I contend that we are the first race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race. I contend that every acre added to our territory means the birth of more of the English race who otherwise would not be brought into existence".

He traces also the social and economic history of the Empire. He confronts and analyses the racism built into colonial government, and assesses the alleged benefits bestowed on colonised races by their British rulers, which topic provides

the most densely packed and closely argued pages in the book. A substantial portion of the book considers the currently vexed topic of slavery, and on this subject Mr Sanghera is in my view at his best. Simply put, his view is that slavery is an evil that the different mores and standards of a bygone era can do nothing to excuse, and he makes this case forcefully and without hysteria, often letting facts speak for themselves. He does so also when dealing with such topics as the Amritsar massacre, the brutal putting-down of the Indian Mutiny, and, within my living memory as it happens, the Hola camp atrocity of 1959, when eleven Mau Mau prisoners in a rehabilitation camp were beaten to death by guards [the first official account of their deaths claimed that they had died after drinking bacterially infected water]. A lesser writer would have turned such awful episodes as these into melodrama: rather, Mr Sanghera's studiously level tone compels our fascinated [if perhaps reluctant] attention.

In some places the story Mr Sanghera tells is not an agreeable one – the account of the inventively vile cruelties visited by some slave owners on their slaves is not for the faint hearted. But, even when he is writing about humanity at its least humane, his prose is lucid, elegant, spare and powerful. This is all the more commendable for the fact that this is a work of intricate scholarship crafted with compelling readability – the most difficult of all authorial feats to pull off.

Above all, Mr Sanghera makes the case that the Britain we inhabit today is the country it is because of the empire, that its merits and defects alike are consequences of the empire, and that the evolution of a truly integrated social order will involve our confronting and understanding those consequences far more fully than we do now. Once all white Britons can accept that, as Mr Sanghera phrases it, “brown people are here now because we used to be there”, a great deal else will come into focus, just as it does in these pages. Chapter three of *Empireland* is entitled *Difficult History*, and that phrase would make an admirable subtitle for this whole book: and, as we all know, those who do not understand their difficult history will be condemned, sooner or later, to repeat it, with yet more difficulty. This is a brilliant, beautiful, brave and above all necessary book.

**Empireland, by Sathnam Sanghera, Viking £19.99, Penguin £9.99,  
Kindle £7.99, Audiobook Penguin Audio £22.99**

**Copy for the July/August edition should be posted either to the Parish  
News Mailbox, or to JCPrintmail@gmx.co.uk by Thursday June 24<sup>th</sup>.  
Completed artwork will be sent to the printers overnight on Sunday June  
27<sup>th</sup> for publication in church on Saturday July 3rd.**



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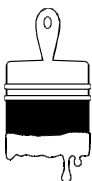
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*Sunday worship has resumed with celebrations of Parish Holy Communion at 1000 and 1130. The 1000 service is live-streamed on YouTube. As we progress through the relaxation of lockdown, arrangements for resumption of other services and church activities will be published in Steve Dixon's weekly Parish Update emails and elsewhere.*

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 19 Ashleigh Grove  
 Tel. 2580270

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**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



*Picture Credit: Cullen Smith*

## **ACTIVITIES**

### **Mothers' Union**

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

### **W3 – Women's Group**

1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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**

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