

LINK

The newspaper for the Diocese of Newcastle



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Head of Chaplaincy stars in new TV series



► **Geordie Hospital, left to right, Revd Capt Katie Watson and Poppy Jingles with colleagues Isma Iqbal, Abbie, Jeremy French, Sean Marshall Kellie and Allan Wood**

PHOTO: MARK TAYLOR/CHANNEL 4

HHEAD of Chaplaincy at the Newcastle-Upon-Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Revd Capt Katie Watson is one of the main characters featuring in Channel 4's fly-on-the-wall documentary 'Geordie Hospital'.

The six-part series, which began on 17 January, follows the trust's staff through a shift, featuring a cast from porters to surgeons, and dental nurses to sewing room ladies.

Katie, who has been Head of Chaplaincy since December 2020, was tasked with showing the crew the inner workings of the trust. This included Poppy Jingles, the chaplain-

cy team dog, to which she credits her involvement in the documentary. She said: "Maybe it was the fact Poppy Jingles was with me, because before I knew it I found myself as one of the characters that the series would feature!"

"The executive chief nurse here at Newcastle Hospitals says of the chaplains 'they get where only water can,' and this is very true. As a team we are intrinsically embedded in the life of the trust, providing the gifts of presence and time for staff, patients and relatives.

"As such, when it came to showing the crew around, I was able to show the many cogs of the trust and how

each is necessary to enable to keep the whole organisation moving."

Filming for the show took place in the summer, and was subject to a range of ever changing government and Department of Health and Social Care Covid requirements. This ensured infection prevention, confidentiality and safety while filming.

Speaking on the impact of the series, Katie added: "The key thing for me to get across in the programme - and I really hope it does - is to myth bust the beliefs about what chaplains do and don't, and to enable people to see the full breadth and depth of the NHS.

"I would really hope people go away thinking about their patient/relative experience and how many trades/jobs they have come into contact with, or who may have been a necessary yet unseen cog in the Newcastle Hospitals."

Channel 4's Commissioning Editor, Rita Daniels said: "This is an exciting brand-new series that features an incredible collection of inspiring, passionate and dedicated hospital staff. In each of the episodes you can clearly see their dedication, deep felt connection and enthusiasm for the patients they meet every day."

Camila Lewis of CEO Curve Media

said: "It was incredibly humbling to film with the fantastic staff who are at the heart of Newcastle Hospitals. Through their eyes we experience the beauty and complexities of their patients and the NHS."

As Head of Chaplaincy, Katie oversees a team of 14 chaplains from a variety of religious beliefs - including Sikh, Hindu, Jewish, Humanist, Pastoral, Muslim and Christian faiths - to provide spiritual support and comfort to patients.

■ **Geordie Hospital is aired on Mondays at 8pm on Channel 4 until Monday 28 February, and previous episodes are available on All 4.**

Letter to the Editor...

ANOTHER Christmas has come and gone. The retailer's favourite hymn 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus', as their Christmas offering, spanned the final three months of 2021.

Advent Calendars were a feature of my childhood, usually a card with little windows opened daily as we anticipated Christmas, a Christian message behind each window. The most expensive 2021 Advent calendar cost almost £8 million, a large cube with windows opening onto an ultra-luxury gift.

Lower down the scale is the £1M Porsche calendar and Harrods Wedgwood Advent Calendar house - a mere £9,600 - with each

window offering a jasper treat. It sold out by the end of November.

There were more secular advent calendars available this year than ones with Nativity scenes. Cat advent calendars outnumbered Christian ones. If that isn't a wake up call to Christians to consider and share their faith and the true meaning of Christmas I don't know what is.

May the humble but powerful image of the baby in the manger, who grew up to teach us all that we can know about ourselves and our potential to discover God in one another, sustain us through the coming year.

Canon Alan Hughes

Well done Pamela!



> Pamela Hood (left) is presented with her award by North Tyneside Director of Public Health Wendy Burke

CONGRATULATIONS to Pamela Hood who has been presented with the #BeatCovidNE Acts of Kindness Community Award for North Tyneside.

In the last edition of Link, we shared the exciting news that Pamela – a member of St Peter's Monkseaton – won the accolade after her amazing efforts during the first lockdown to keep members of her church connected.

Deanery Synod and PCC member Pamela, 73, set up a Covid comms hub to keep people updated on

the latest news, updates and community events – she has continued to send this out and now has more than 120 people on her distribution list.

And she also set up a mobile library/bookshop, using her living room as a storage space for the incredible operation.

Pamela was formally presented with her award in December by Wendy Burke, Director of Public Health for North Tyneside.

Search for the next Bishop of Newcastle

THE Diocese's Vacancy-in-See Committee invites you to help in the process of finding the next Bishop of Newcastle.

The first stage of consultation has already taken place with more than 660 responses to a public survey and 65 people attending a public meeting in January.

It is planned to hold the main meeting of the Vacancy-in-See Committee on Wednesday 9 February.

Anyone who would like to comment on the needs of the Diocese or

the wider church, or put forward candidates for the position, are invited to write before 7 February to Brad Cook, Archbishops' Adviser for Appointments and Development at aaad.office@churchofengland.org or Richard Tilbrook, Prime Minister's Secretary for Appointments at richard.tilbrook@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

The Crown Nominations Commission will meet on 7 June, 18 July and 19 July to decide on the successor to Bishop Christine who retired as Bishop of Newcastle in November 2021.

For more information, [click here](#).

Cedarwood Trust Vacancies

THE Cedarwood Trust is dedicated to building social capital, creating educational and economic opportunities and tackling poverty and food insecurity in Meadow Well estate, North Shields.

There are currently four positions available as a Cedarwood Trust Trustee, two candidates with experience and expertise in strategy and management, and two candidates who live in Meadow Well and share the values of 'Nurture, Nourish and Thrive' for the people.

More information on the vacancies is available [here](#), with the closing date set for Monday 7 February

Gospel Readings

February

1st	Mark 5.21-end	16th	Mark 8.22-26
2nd	Mark 6.1-6a	17th	Mark 8.27-33
3rd	Mark 6.7-13	18th	Mark 8.34-9.1
4th	Mark 6.14-29	19th	Mark 9.2-13
5th	Mark 6.30-34	20th	Luke 8.22-35
6th	Luke 5.1-11	21st	Mark 9.14-29
7th	Mark 6.53-end	22nd	Mark 9.30-37
8th	Mark 7.1-13	23rd	Mark 9.38-40
9th	Mark 7.14-23	24th	Mark 9.41-end
10th	Mark 7.24-30	25th	Mark 10.1-12
11th	Mark 7.31-end	26th	Mark 10.13-16
12th	Mark 8.1-10	27th	Luke 9.28-36 (37-43a)
13th	Luke 6.17-26	28th	Mark 10.17-27
14th	Mark 8.11-13		
15th	Mark 8.14-21		

Comings & Goings

Appointments

Revd Stephen Wright, Priest in Charge of Quidenham Group of Parishes, South Norfolk in the Diocese of Norwich, has been appointed Priest in Charge of Haltwhistle and Greenhead and Assistant Curate of Beltingham with Henshaw

Revd Chris Grocock, Priest in Charge of Holy

Sepulchre, Ashington is also going to be Area Dean of Morpeth Deanery

Revd James McGowan, Vicar of St James and St Basil Fenham is also going to be Area Dean of Newcastle West Deanery

Revd Allison Harding, Vicar of Newburn is also going to be Assistant Area Dean of Newcastle West Deanery

CONTACT US

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Link is produced ten times a year by the Diocese of Newcastle, with joint issues for August/September and December/January. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Diocese or the editor. The editor is pleased to consider articles or letters of not more than 350 words for publication. Where possible, articles should be accompanied by a good-quality digital photograph of 250dpi or higher. Please contact the editor before submitting obituaries.

For advertising rates and deadlines see www.newcastle.anglican.org/link.
Copy date for March 2022 issue: Monday 14 February.



Comp winners are cream of the crop



► Students at Wark C of E have loved engaging with the environment as part of their curriculum

YOUNG inventors from a rural church school who were crowned winners of a national farming competition have presented their innovative ideas to the House of Commons.

Pupils from Wark C of E Primary School took part in the special event last November after they won top prize in the National Farmer's Union (NFU) 'Farmvention' competition.

The contest challenged schools to develop an invention, innovation or idea that would help British farmers care for the environment and reduce their impact on the climate.

The pupils entered their design for an automated watering system, for the crops they were growing inside the school polytunnel, which had been inspired by the NFU's 'Stemterprise' resources.

Mrs McKay, the pupils' teacher, said: "Working on the watering system, the aim was to come up with a solution that used renewable energy and was sustainable.

"The result was a solar powered sprinkler system, drawing water from the river, complete with a class-designed sensor to trigger watering when the ground became too dry.

"The children also realised that the village allotments were behind the school and so factored in sharing their renewable energy with other growers. It was really amazing."

NFU regional director Adam Bedford said: "Wark Primary's entry is really inspiring - delivering a very practical but climate friendly solution to a real-life problem that they faced for themselves when trying to produce high quality food crops. Congratulations to everyone involved."

As national winners, the school also received £1,000 to spend on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) learning.



Bishop's Letter

With Bishop Mark Wroe

THERE is a lot in the news at the moment about parties. It seems incredible to me that the future of some of our elected government leaders might be dependent on the definition of a party and who was or was not invited. Such is the strange way in which the Covid-19 pandemic has affected our view of so much of life.

All of us know about parties or celebrations that have been cancelled, shrunk or postponed because of the pandemic, as well as other life events which have been overlooked or not marked in the way we would have wanted. This is in part the reason for the significant negative public reaction to the revelations of Number 10's parties, notwithstanding the important questions of integrity.

As the people of God, our ultimate trajectory is to party! We look forward one day to the great feast, the heavenly banquet, the everlasting party where we celebrate God's eternal love and life without death, mourning, crying or pain.

The parable of the wedding banquet in Matthew 22 reminds us that not everyone will accept the invitation, and that those who do will need to do some preparation for the party itself. For me, an invitation to a party brings with it a sense of excitement and anticipation, but it also prompts questions that need thinking about, such as what to wear, and what to take. Our preparation for the party is important, as it says something about our attitude of heart towards the person who has invited us.

As we look towards the journey of Lent, and the celebrations of Easter, what attitude of heart do we have towards the God who has invited us through Jesus Christ to communion with God, and ultimately to the heavenly banquet? This is a very deep and personal question, and it is one that can be deflected by pointing to the outward appearance of religious observance.

If the outward appearance of faith is all there is, without taking the inner journey of the heart in faith, it can be compared to the clothes of the improperly dressed guest at the wedding banquet in the parable, which speak of a misplaced entitlement and an unwillingness to change.

Transformation requires not just an openness to change, but also a humility of heart, in a lifelong journey of preparation, which allows the inner work with the Holy Spirit to take place, and finds new expression through our worship and actions. Thankfully, we are given companions for this journey of faith who can help us on the way, and celebrate with us.

I pray that the coronavirus situation will ease, and that there will be celebrations for all of us as we embrace 2022. But may they be celebrations that arise from a deep sense of thankfulness for all that God has given, and from an ongoing appreciation of all he continues to work within us, within our communities and in our society; to make us more just, more merciful and ever humbler. That will be worth celebrating!

With prayers and love

+ Mark

#LiveLent 2022

THIS year's national Church theme for Lent is 'Embracing Justice'.

The theme - launched in late January - draws upon and remembers the cry of the Prophet Isaiah: 'Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice?'

This Lent we are called to reflect on the injustices of the world and ask what God is calling us to do about them.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's 2022 Lent Book, *Embracing Justice* (SPCK), and the daily reflections booklet for adults (CHP) have both been written by Isabelle Hamley.

Each week we follow a different thread through the many stories of justice in the Bible to explore how God works with humanity to bring justice, wholeness and salvation to all.



As in recent years, the weekly themes of the Archbishop's Lent Book, supported by online resources for churches and groups, will also be explored in daily reflection from the Church of England.

'#LiveLent: Embracing Justice' will offer a daily Bible reading, a short reflection and a prayer, as well as a practical challenge linked to the week's theme.

An accompanying child's version will also be available to help children and their families explore how we can live well together. They are available to pre-order at [Church House Publishing](#).

The book and booklets will be accompanied by daily social media posts from Ash Wednesday (2 March) to Easter Day (17 April), together with a wide range of free digital resources for individuals, groups and churches. [Click here](#) for more information.

Join a free webinar on Tuesday February 8 at 11am to hear more about '#LiveLent: Embracing Justice' and take home practical ideas and inspiration for using the theme in your church to support evangelism and discipleship. The webinar will be led by Amaris Cole, Head of Digital, and Thomas Allain-Chapman, Head of Church House Publishing. [Click here to register.](#)

New Facebook group invite for churchwardens

A NEW Facebook group has been set up in our Diocese to help share relevant churchwarden/church information.

After being suggested at a recent churchwarden's training event, the group will allow churchwardens to support each other, share

ideas and celebrate projects or activities that they have done.

There are more than 70 members already and all churchwardens in our Diocese are invited to join the Facebook group [here](#) or by searching 'Newcastle Diocese Churchwardens' on Facebook.



ALAY reader from Allendale put in a peak performance on Boxing Day as he completed a virtual cycle challenge to the top of Mount Everest.

Tim Burdon, Lay Reader at St Cuthbert's Church in Allendale, undertook the gruelling feat from his living room to raise funds for Motor Neurone Disease Association, a charity which supports his friend David.

So far, Tim, Church Engagement and Fundraising Officer for Christian Aid North East, has raised more than £10,000 which will help fund vital research and support families affected by the disease.

Tim said: "I am moved and humbled by the dignity and determination of David and his family. The Covid pandemic has been hard for everyone, but they have had to cope with the slow progression of MND during lockdown.

"Climbing Everest on my indoor bike felt like a big challenge, but I know that for David climbing the stairs feels like Everest now."

David said: "Having nursed my mum as she died with MND, I have a good idea what's to come. I was told at the time it was not inheritable - my form is! The C9ORF72 mediated ALS I have is the most common form with a known genetic cause. I'm on a genetic therapy clinical trial which may halt the disease."

A whopping total of 8,848 metres was covered during the challenge which Tim - accompanied virtually by his friend Carolyn from her lounge in Peterborough - began at 7am and took all day to complete.

Describing the completion of the challenge as "overwhelming", he added: "At the end of a very long day in the saddle, it was extraordinary to see the total donations exceed my target of £1 for every metre of elevation.

"I feel totally bowled-over by people's generosity. Donations are still coming in, with every little contribution going to fund research and support families living with

Tim raises £10k climbing Mount Everest from his living room



► Tim was powered by a mix of leftover Christmas dinner and encouragement being sent from people all over the world

MND. I'm so proud to support [MNDA](#), and it's so good to know that the money raised will be supporting people with this cruel disease."

■ You can still donate to Tim's fundraiser via his [Just Giving page here](#).

By Dave Johnson, Project Coordinator for Youth and Children's Work, MINE

IN late 2019 Joel, the youth worker from St Thomas', called me to discuss joining in with our youth work in Byker and Walker, and seeing if there were any areas he and some volunteers from the church could help us develop. The timing was incredible - Walker Parish had just joined Mission Initiative Newcastle East (MINE) and we were ready to get to know the area.

We decided that St Thomas' would join us in Walker Park each Friday night for a couple of hours of 'Detached' youth work. 'Detached' is all about meeting young people where they are, in parks and on the streets, and building relationships. Each week volunteers from St Thomas' would join the local team members and head into Walker Park.

During lockdown, we rode on bikes with masks. In winter we wrapped up warm and took hot chocolate. When it rained, we still showed up. For two years the team committed to being in Walker Park every Friday, bringing footballs, chalk, snacks and drinks.

The team from St Thomas' hadn't done this kind of youth work before. It was such a joy to see them step out of their comfort zones, showing the young people that they were worth giving up free time for. They showed that people wanted to hear their stories, get to know them, and share

How MINE is working with St Thomas' to support the youth in Newcastle



► The 'Detached' team has worked extremely hard to improve the relationship between the youth and the church

the fulness of God's love with them. One volunteer told me he'd been amazed by how one young person was a natural leader, with such a good heart.

Other team members shared about the privilege it was to be welcomed into young people's space, and how some would wait for us each week, with others coming out just to see us. The relationships the team built with the young people were so much deeper and more beautiful than they could have expected on that first Friday evening.

Joel and the team from St Thomas' are

about to embark on a new project, working with parishes in Newcastle's West End, and we're so excited to hear what goes on with that. As for MINE, 'Detached' on a Friday night will continue with a local team, we've been able to start a new youth club at Walker Parish, and St Thomas' and MINE are establishing an Eden team in Byker, all thanks to people's willingness to step out of their comfort zones and join in with what God is doing in Walker.

■ To read the full Christmas with MINE 2021 Report, detailing their success over the winter period, [please click here](#)

St Edmund's receives Community Action Northumberland's inaugural Aspire Award



► Left to right, PCC secretary Joan Anderson, Treasurer Andrew Newton, Churchwarden Sheila Newton and Churchwarden June Scott

COMMUNITY Action Northumberland (CAN) has awarded its first 'Aspire Award' to [St Edmund's, Edmundbyers](#).

The Aspire Award, which was developed by CAN's Village Hall Advisor Louise Currie with assistance from Sheila Newton, rewards exemplary governance, financial management, insurance, health and safety, communications and maintenance of rural buildings.

St Edmund's is Grade II listed, having undergone heavy restoration over the years, and is in a stunning position with a graveyard and surrounding trees.

The church displays beautiful stained-glass windows of varying periods and a flat-topped window described as the 'plague window', through which people could listen to the service without entering the building. It is thought that the lancet window is original.

When assessing the church, the CAN representative was "impressed with the standard of management of St Edmund's Church".

She went on to say: "The positive attitude of members to the assessment process was admirable. As the very first church to be Aspire assessed, it was most-encouraging that the members embraced the challenge and were willing to be the first to put their heads above the parapet."

Sheila Newton, Churchwarden for St Edmund's, said: "Preparing for the assessment meant effort was needed to make sure that things that had not been maintained were brought up to date.

"However, this was not difficult thanks to the hard work of the PCC members, regarding such matters as minutes of meetings, insurances, finances, the Terrier and inventory, and care of the fabric over the years.

"No-one was more surprised and delighted than me when we passed with flying colours."

At least eight more churches in rural Northumberland will also be supported to obtain this award, through the [Rural Churches for Everyone Project](#).

You can view services and events happening at St Edmunds on its [A Church Near You page](#).

A warm welcome to Jo!

Revd Jo Trickey has joined our Diocese as Intern Ministry Officer and is based at our Resource Church, St Thomas' Newcastle. She has moved north after living in Surrey for more than a decade where most recently she was Curate at Christ Church Guildford. In this edition of Link, she tells us a little more about herself and her new role.

HI, I'm Jo and I started at the Diocese in October. I'm the Intern Ministry Officer, you may wonder what this role is!

I work with two different schemes which help young people grow in faith and explore their calling. The New Wine Discipleship Year is for 18 to 24-year-olds to grow as disciples of Jesus, and the Church of England Ministry Experience Scheme which is about giving young people aged 18 to 30 an immersive experience of ministry in the Church of England as they spend time exploring what God is calling them on to.

I lived in Newcastle as a teenager and am so grateful to the men and women who invested in me as

a young person and who encouraged me to explore my calling. I was an intern for a year at 18 and loved working in a small local church. In my wildest dreams I never expected to be ordained, and have had the wildest ride following Jesus and encouraging young people to explore their calling. I am delighted to be back in the North East, with my husband and kids.



➤ Revd Jo Trickey

I wonder, do you know someone in your church or family who might want to come and spend a year with us? Maybe they, just like I did, need someone to encourage them to explore who God is calling them to be. I'd love to hear from you and from our young people, please do get in touch at j.trickey@newcastle.anglican.org or 07746743857.

Ministry Experience Scheme

ARE you wondering what God is calling you to do next? Have you ever wondered if it might be ministry?

The new Ministry Experience Scheme is a great opportunity for people aged 18 to 30 to spend a year serving God. As part of this scheme you will explore your calling and learn more about yourself, while gaining experience of Christian ministry. Accommodation and living expenses are provided.

To hear from previous participants or to register your interest, please [click here](#). For an informal chat about the scheme, please contact j.trickey@newcastle.anglican.org.

NEWCASTLE Cathedral staff are busy preparing for a year of stimulating exhibitions and events which bring together spiritual, ethical, historical, and contemporary themes and issues.

We hope that the artistic programme will encourage readers of Link and their friends and families to experience the cathedral anew, both spiritually and creatively, against the spectacular historic backdrop.

In the months ahead, we'll be celebrating the building itself, alongside wedding gowns, pilgrimage, fantastic beasts, women's hidden stories and the Lindisfarne Gospels. We hope there will be something of interest for everyone.

Faithful Judgements in Fertility (a university study exploring experiences of people of faith in their encounters with new reproductive and genetic technologies), runs until early February. The thought-provoking exhibition provides an artistic response through a 'Chapbook' of prayers created through collaboration with Canon Rachel Mann, who wrote the prayers, and artist Marianne Wilde.

A Century of Wedding Gowns, Wednesday 16 February to Thursday 24 March, showcases 40 wedding gowns and accessories from the last 140 years. We juxtapose handmade, home-made, borrowed, and rejuvenated gowns from past decades with the work of fashion designers, Norman Hartnell, Elizabeth Emanuel and Bruce Oldfield. Their designs are reflected in several gowns, some being copies of the most well-known royal wedding gowns and tiaras, including Her Serene Highness Princess Grace of Monaco, Princess



NEWCASTLE
CATHEDRAL

View
from the
Lantern

With Lindy Gilliland, Project Manager,
Common Ground in Sacred Space

Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, Princess Anne, the Princess Royal, Diana, Princess of Wales, and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge.

Other gowns have been donated or loaned by high profile figures or bridal salons. These include: two gowns worn by the daughters of the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland (on loan by Her Grace's kind permission); local celebrity and Dragon's Den star, Sara Davies' wedding dress; a gown donated by Kleinfeld, New York – known for the TV programme 'Say Yes to the Dress'; and a 1923 winter velvet wedding gown, handmade by Coco Chanel for a family friend. For enthusiasts of Downton Abbey there is a copy of the Crawleys' Downton Tiara displayed with a wedding gown worn in Northumberland in 1898.

Collector and curator, Sunderland-based Kevin Thornhill, studied Art and Design at Manchester University with the intention of working in theatre wardrobe. After serving his time with London theatres and the Emanuels, where he was a member of the team making Diana, Princess of Wales' wedding gown, he returned to the North East to run his own wedding business. Now retired, he showcases his wedding gown collection to raise funds for charities.

Guided Tours

Visitors may wish to book for one of Kevin's entertaining guided tours of the collection or make their own way round with the exhibition catalogue. Pre-booked visiting groups are also welcome and should contact learning@newcastlecathedral.org.uk to arrange a tour.

Wedding Gown Fashion Show, Thursday 10 March

Additional gowns from the collection will be modelled in a fundraising Fashion Show. Local models will showcase royal copies and past fashions, accompanied by the collector's lively commentary. Early booking is advisable [here](#).

Weddings Celebration Service, Saturday 19 March from 2-3pm

Our weddings celebration draws to a close with a special cathedral service. Would you like to mark an anniversary or renew your commitment to one another? We're inviting couples and their families across the Diocese to join the Dean in this special occasion. If you would like to attend the free service, please [click here](#) to book your place. You can also choose to round off with a celebratory afternoon tea in the refectory and then take a tour of the Wedding Gowns exhibition with the collector – please book tickets via [Eventbrite](#). For more information, please contact the cathedral on 0191 232 1939 or via office@newcastlecathedral.org.uk

Help us to showcase Newcastle and our amazing cathedral!

By Lucy Cooke, Volunteer Coordinator at Newcastle Cathedral



DIFFERENT COUNTRY:
DIFFERENT CHURCH
National Cathedrals Conference
16 to 19 May 2022

HAVE you ever thought about volunteering at Newcastle Cathedral but aren't sure about taking the first step or how much time you'll be able to commit? This could be the perfect chance to give it a go with no long-term commitment required.

In May this year, Newcastle Cathedral will be hosting the National Cathedrals' annual conference. The conference will see over 300 delegates from cathedrals across the country come together to explore topics such as racial and social justice alongside climate change and re-imagining the church; under the theme 'Different Country: Different Church'. [Click here](#) for the full programme including details of all the guest speakers and presenters.

There will be lots of opportunities to help make sure that all the

delegates receive our famous Geordie welcome, and that they are able to find their way around our beautiful city. All volunteers will receive a full briefing and a conference branded t-shirt. You will need to be able to commit to at least one two-to-three-hour shift over the course of the conference (Sunday 15 to Thursday 19 May) as well as attend a briefing session in late April. There will be no requirement to continue as a cathedral volunteer after the conference, though you may have so much fun that you'd like to stay on with us - in which case you will be very welcome!

To register your interest in volunteering at the conference, please [register online](#) or contact me at lucy.cooke@newcastlecathedral.org.uk or 0191 232 1939.

Grace Darling C of E welcomes initiative promoting reading for wellbeing



➤ Jane Sampson, Community Reading Worker with pupils from Grace Darling C of E Primary School's Story Club

A NEW community reading service is helping to bring stories to life for pupils and parents at a Northumberland church school.

Designed to engage children in the concept of 'reading for pleasure', the weekly Story Club at Grace Darling C of E Primary School in Newbiggin-by-the-Sea explores different ways to access stories, such as local libraries and also online.

The popular sessions are hosted by representatives from the Community Reading Partnership, a new initiative which has seen a number of community hubs created within the local area, designed to improve people's mental health and wellbeing through encouraging them to read.

While Story Club is available exclusively to pupils and parents of pupils who attend the school, the community hubs are open to all and welcome readers of all ages to each session, who come together to talk about reading, discover new books, meet like-minded individuals and find escapism through literature.

Sharon Cole, Co-Headteacher at Grace Darling C of E Primary School, said: "Reading is a huge part of our curriculum at Grace Darling so getting involved with the new Reading Partnership programme within Newbiggin was a great fit for us."

■ For more information about the community reading sessions please contact read@northumberland.gov.uk.

By Joanne Christie,
Generous Giving Team
Leader
[@JoanneCTweets](#)



National contactless pilot launches

LAST autumn Newcastle Diocese was invited by the National Giving Team to take part in a 12-month pilot scheme, to test out the new model Goodbox Core - a device for taking contactless donations. As one of only six dioceses selected, we jumped at the chance!

The trial - along with three others that began last year - is in preparation for a much bigger project, a national rollout of contactless giving over 2022 to 2024. By testing various models and devices in specific settings, the National Giving Team will be in a position to work with individual dioceses to begin rolling out an approach to contactless giving more widely.

Four of our churches are currently part of the pilot. Blanchland Abbey is one of them, selected because of very poor connectivity, being located in a remote and deep valley with great potential for contactless donations. Revd Helen Savage said: "It's estimated that Blanchland Abbey receives around 50,000 visitors per year, but without a permanent presence in the church, we fail to maximise the income potential from those who visit. In addition, the abbey church hosts up to around 12 weddings per year."

Tweedmouth and Spittal churches are also taking part, and will be assessing how well a single device can be shared between two churches in the same parish. Tweedmouth has good visitor potential and Spittal hosts most of the weddings and baptisms in the area, as well as attracting holiday makers in the summer season. Whilst neither church has Wi-Fi capacity, they both have volunteers willing to learn, use and share the equipment!

Other churches taking part are St Peter's, Falstone, part of the 'Rural Churches for Everyone' project, currently exploring opportunities that might emerge from tourism and pilgrimage routes, and the busy suburban parish of St Aidan's, Brunton Park who will be providing insight into how the Goodbox Core performs against more basic equipment that operates with connectivity.

The strategy for the national rollout seeks to achieve a fair distribution of devices across the country, respective to the size of each diocese. This will be balanced alongside key learnings



► **"Our contactless equipment provides a constant electronic beacon to remind people to 'Give Generously' and has provided us with the opportunity to talk about giving" – Marie Hunter-Ness, Authorised Lay Minister at Falstone with Greystead & Thorneyburn**

from the pilots in terms of what is realistic to deliver. Funded by Archbishops' Council, it reflects the second priority of the National Giving Strategy and the aim to equip half the Church of England's 12,000 parishes with the ability to receive digital gifts across both contactless and online platforms.

Throughout the Church of England, there are already close to 4,000 digital giving accounts, whether online, contactless, or both. The rollout aims to provide at least 2,000 contactless devices and see 1,000 new online giving accounts opened.

It is hoped that Newcastle Diocese will be invited to take part in a national rollout towards

the end of this year which will support those churches who might otherwise struggle to afford a device. In the meantime, we encourage all parishes - who have the means to introduce contactless giving - to do so as soon as possible. The **Generous Giving Team** is available to provide immediate advice to guide you through this. We also have our own small supply of contactless equipment available for loan and this has proved a great way to raise funds to purchase a device as well as being an opportunity to 'try before you buy'.

If you have any questions about getting started with contactless in your parish or would like to know more about the National Giving Strategy, please get in touch with [myself](#) or [Leanne](#).

Church gives out over 60 coats to those less fortunate this Christmas

ST John's Church, Sleekburn has given away over 60 coats through its 'Coat Rack' programme over the Christmas period.

Inspired by the 'wall of kindness' initiative, the church opened its hall for an hour every Thursday of December, to give away free coats to anyone in need of one.

The church received donations of high-quality coats - including brand-new ones for children - as well as scarves and hats to distribute over the cool winter season. St John's was also supported by its sister parishes, in the forms of prayer, advertising and coats.

Jean Wright, a member of St John's congregation, said about the venture: "The generosity of the people around Bedlington and Northumberland has been out of this world."

"The whole experience has proved that given a chance and an idea, people are more than happy to help others. The congregations of all three churches have benefitted from the experience."

With more than 50 coats left, St John's Church would love for another church in the North East to be able to bless their own community in a similar way, and start their own Coat Rack to distribute the remaining coats.

■ If your church is interested, or you have any questions, please contact Anne Wager-Bradley at awwb@btinternet.com

Resources launched for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

CHURCHES across the nation have already begun preparing for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, which will fall on 2-5 June 2022.

Hope Together has provided a range of resources for churches, including '70 Acts of Service', a new contemporary hymn to be used in celebrations and Platinum Jubilee branded banners and posters.

You can discover more resources [here](#).



► Jean Mayland

RIP Jean Mayland, 1936-2021

WE are sad to share the news that Revd Jean Mayland, who passionately campaigned for the ordination of women in the Church of England, died on 7 December 2021.

Jean moved to our Diocese in the 2000s following her retirement.

After studying for a modern History degree and Theology Diploma at Oxford University, Jean went onto work as a teacher but always had a strong calling to work for the Church of England.

In 1965, Jean was elected to the Church Assembly as a lay member for Southwell Diocese, and she joined the Anglican Group for the Ordination of Women. Jean served

on the Church Assembly and General Synod from 1965-1990, her main area of concern being the fact women could not be ordained to the priesthood. She was also known and valued for the support she gave in her affirmation of lay people.

Jean supported her husband Ralph, a vicar, in Manton, Brightside and Ecclesfield, where she became the first woman Reader in the Sheffield Diocese.

Jean's ministry and involvement extended beyond the UK, and the Church of England, and her skills and gifts were recognised in many outstanding appointments. Jean attended the Nairobi Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1975, being elected to the Central

Committee. She served on the Central Committee until 1991, attending Assemblies in Vancouver and Canberra. She also represented the Church of England on both the British and the World Council of Churches, and was President of the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women from 1986 - 1990.

In 1993 Jean began working in the Durham Diocese as its Ecumenical Officer, and in May 1994 was among the first women to be ordained to the priesthood.

In 2000 Jean was appointed Co-ordinating Secretary for Church Life and then Assistant General Secretary until 2003 when she retired. Jean was a founder member of WATCH (women and the church)

which is dedicated to the promotion of equality and diversity within the Church of England which she supported until her death along with Modern Church, Inclusive Church and Changing Attitude.

In retirement, Jean never stopped. She moved to Hexham where she continued to minister and took services in its beautiful Abbey and in surrounding churches including Blanchland. She was also a dedicated supporter of Heavenfield Church.

While there was much sadness at her passing, memories of her life and work were met with huge gratitude. She leaves an incredible legacy as she was an inspiration to so many: determined, fearless and a true pioneer.

Advent and Christmas 2021



> Local artist Artep Avordno, alongside members of the Benwell and Scotswood Parish Team, helped design the 'rubbish' nativity



> St John's Wallsend hosted a 'Nativity on the move', with the help of the Salvation Army Band

ACROSS the Diocese all of our wonderful parishes and churches celebrated the Christmas and Advent season in a number of different ways.

From sculpting nativity scenes out of rubbish to hosting quiet and tranquil illuminations, here are just a few of the events we saw within our Diocese.

The Benwell and Scotswood Team Parish created the most unique nativity in the North East, fashioning the traditional scene out of recycled litter.

Using the tagline 'Have a rubbish Christmas!', they hoped to address not only the ongoing issue of littering in the West End of Newcastle, but that while our last couple of Christmases have been 'rubbish' this one could be something positive.

Local children's groups and asylum seekers helped create the masterpiece alongside a local artist, which Revd Chris Minchin described as "representing the true meaning of Christmas, that Jesus comes to us in reality and turns our world into something good".

The last weekend of Advent saw Newcastle Cathedral launch its 'The Stars Come

Out At Night' event, bringing an enchanting sound and light installation to the public.

The display, created by a group called **Stellar Projects**, was also accompanied by a bespoke atmospheric soundtrack by composer Oliver Vibrans.

The wonderful starry landscape created a magical winter display, which perfectly evoked the peacefulness we sought as we made our way through Advent.

Lyndsey Stephenson, a member of the team that created the artwork, said: "The installation created a mesmerising environment where the audience could immerse themselves in the soothing beauty of the stars."

Two volunteers of St John's Baby Bank, located in Percy Main, were awarded for their efforts during a Christmas campaign highlighting community spirit.

As part of Karbon Home's '12 Deeds of Christmas' Brenda Oates and Joan Abela received a Community Star, praising their efforts sorting, washing and ironing donated baby items for over 50 struggling parents.

They were nominated by Revd Lee Cleminson, who said: "Those who use the Baby Bank don't see Brenda or Joan, but they do a remarkable job. The community very much appreciate all the hard work and effort they put in."

Within the parishes of Balkwell, St Peter's and St John's Percy Main, 900 children received their 'Christmas in a bag'.

The bags - containing a Christingle pack, selection box, hot chocolate, story booklet and other crafts for children to engage with - were assembled and delivered to local primary schools by volunteers within the community.

A number of organisations came together to donate to the cause, including The Children's Society, St Hilda's Trust, The Newcastle Upon Tyne Church of England Institute, the diocesan youth team and Morrisons.



> Hallways at Ian Ramsey Academy were decorated as part of a 'Christmas A-door-naments' Challenge. Which door would you choose?



> The installation created a wonderfully peaceful display over the Winter period. Image credit: Graham Fotherby



> Revd Lee Cleminson holding Joan and Brenda's Community Star awards



> Revd Lee Cleminson, Vicar at St John's Percy Main, said: "It was a delightful sight to see the children walking home from school, carrying their Christmas bags and shouting 'Thank you Mr Vicar!!'"

HAVE YOUR SAY

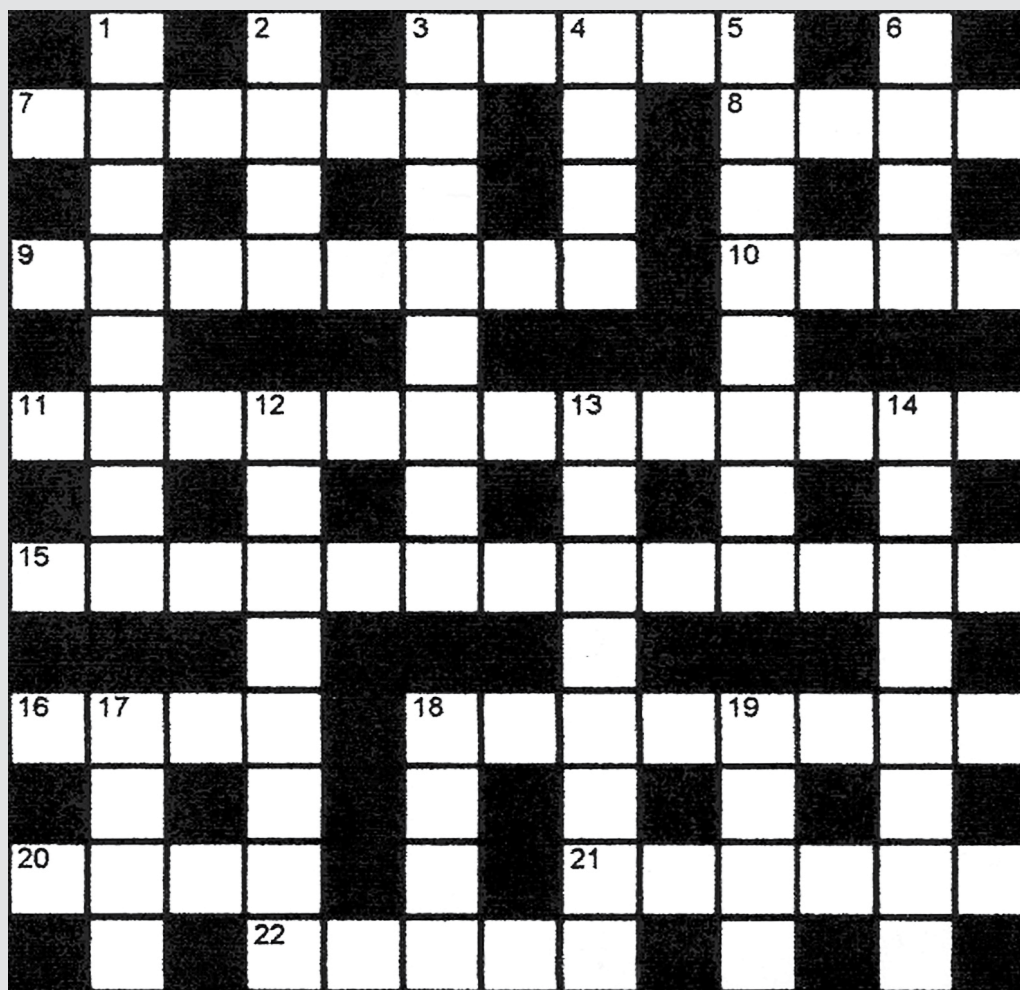
Anything catch your eye in this month's LINK? Something on your mind? Or in your prayers? Send an e-mail, message or letter to LINK and we'll publish the best of them:

Have your say. LINK, Church House, St John's Terrace, North Shields NE29 6HS. Email us: communications@newcastle.anglican.org



Link Crossword 179 *Compiled by Mary Sutton*

This month we are including the crossword for fun (sorry, no prize this month). Please do not submit crosswords to Church House.



ACROSS

3. Dispute covered up by unpopular guests (5)
7. Pious duo vet upset (6)
8. It's loaned for the time before Easter (4)
9. Began to imbibe litres when taken by surprise (8)
10. Solemn promise revealed by goatherd (4)
11. Val's ration may upset Christian organization (9,4)
15. High Church member offering coaching to all, possibly (5-8)
16. Earnest appeal coming from quiet meadow (4)
18. Vehicle seen in small urban area with an inadequate supply (8)
20. Part of church in North Avenue (4)
21. Eastern girl not finishing pastry (6)
22. For royal, a man, it's deserved (5)

DOWN

1. Hold back others before shower (8)
2. Needy pair pocketing rings (4)
3. Disturbing chalet, it's physically active (8)
4. Well-behaved dog upset about nothing (4)
5. Fabled South American city in ode a lord altered (2,6)
6. Insect swallowed by big native (4)
12. Inhabitant of small place, 6, left with beer (8)
13. Unacceptable dinner initially given to a man, old-fashioned (8)
14. Principal and volunteers with popular preserve (8)
17. Burden for boy receiving ring (4)
18. Religious group in South East court (4)
19. Ring for name (4)

Call for accredited counsellors

NEWCASTLE Diocese's Counselling Service is keen to recruit additional counsellors to help support its clients.

The team is looking to increase the number and diversity of its network of accredited counsellors and psychotherapists to whom clients can be safely referred.

The Counselling Service offers paid referrals and would like to hear from people who are in private practice and are an accredited member in good standing with one of the national professional bodies for counselling or psychotherapy such as BACP, UKCP and BPS.

They must hold professional indemnity, an enhanced DBS certificate, take regular clinical supervision, and be registered with the Information Commissioner's Office.

To learn more about this opportunity with no further commitment, contact **Patty Everitt, Lead for the Counselling Service**, on 07768 869551 or counselling@newcastle.anglican.org.

FINDING THE PURPOSE IN OUR RESOLUTIONS

NOW we are well embedded in this new year many of us are into the serious business of fulfilling our New Year's resolutions. How's it going?

Often, we frame resolutions as challenges that are not easy to do or to keep going. Let's face it if they were easy then we would have already achieved them.

When it comes to achieving something challenging, something that we have not achieved yet but may have wanted to for a while, one thing that can really help is to know: for what purpose do we want this?

Purpose provides motivation and we do not then have to rely solely on will power to get us through.

Will Power is a bit like sprinting. It can get us over short distances quickly but it cannot sustain us in a marathon.

Motivation inspires and compels us by uncovering purpose and meaning at a deeply visceral and emotional level. Motivation keeps us going over long distances and for long times.

Motivation kicks-in when we find purpose: Why do I want to do this?

Wellbeing

by **Patty Everitt, Lead for the Counselling Service**



And when we answer that question, we ask ourselves again and maybe again – for what purpose is that important? – until we find the purpose is so important that we will do whatever is necessary to achieve it or, there is actually no compelling future in this, and we can let it go. Phew!

For what purpose do I want to join the gym (again)? So that I can get fit. And for what purpose do I want to get fit? So that I can go hiking with my better half without puffing and panting and stopping every 30 minutes.

So, it turns out that working out at the gym is not the purpose of my resolution after all.

My purpose is to spend more time enjoying the company of my better half. The gym is the means I have lighted-on but there are many more out there. Some of those alternatives might even be better for me.

We use will power to get us over a hurdle, to push us on our way. Willpower engages us on a rational level: this is what I need to do now.

When it's cold and dark and I really don't want to go out to the gym then my purpose keeps me motivated and will power helps me into my coat, go out into the cold and get myself to the gym.

If you are struggling to achieve your resolution, then take a few moments to ask yourself – for what purpose do I want to do this? – and ask again and maybe again.

If the question – for what purpose do I want to do this? – merely engages you in circular logic or the result is 'musts' or 'shoulds' that hold no energy or appeal for you, then perhaps it is time to let that resolution go.

If it transpires that there is a compelling purpose for you, then re-framing your resolution as this purpose will help you along. It may even help you identify ways and means that you will enjoy and you can save your willpower for something else.

How ever you are proceeding with your resolutions I congratulate you on your courage in setting them. Find the purpose and meaning in your effort and take joy in the journey!

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD 178

ACROSS:

1. Dean 3. Reduced
8. Christmas card 9. Win
10. Bible 12. Saviour
14. Resents 16. Nylon
17. Tot 20. Granddaughter
21. Delayed 22. Crop

DOWN:

1. December 2. Acre
3. Romans 4. Disadvantage
5. Charcoal 6. Dodo
7. Ash Wednesday
11. Baseball 13. Runner-up
15. Strand
18. Aged 19. Star

New group set-up to support Heaton church



By Anne Pickering

ST Gabriel's Church is a beautiful and historic building, a pivotal part of the Heaton community since 1899.

Under the auspices of the PCC we have launched a new organisation: 'Friends of St Gabriel's, Heaton.'

Membership is open to anyone and everyone including those who would like to be involved in supporting the life of the church and sharing in events and activities taking place, as well as those who would like to help develop the church's role in the community and care for the Grade II-listed building for future generations.

We are an all-inclusive and welcoming group, reaching out to those within and beyond our current congregation to any-

one who would like to join and who is prepared to support our aims. It is exciting that we have already recruited 34 members.

Our logo was designed to portray the distinctive tower of St Gabriel's, surrounded and supported by its multitude of friends who have a great affinity with all that St Gabriel's means to so many.

Friends will enjoy an on-going link with St Gabriel's and the satisfaction of helping the parish church to flourish, both now and in the future.

Becoming a Friend of St Gabriel's is easy and only costs £1 a month. Just visit the 'Friends' page on the website [here](#) or pick up an invitation leaflet from the back of the church. In it, you will find details of how to join and the relevant forms. Thank you for your interest.



Church House achieves a silver Eco award

THE diocesan offices at Church House have been awarded a silver Eco Church award!

Eco Church is an interdenominational Christian environmental awards scheme for churches (and diocesan offices), run by A Rocha UK. Eco Church provides tools to help churches weave their response to environmental issues into their mission and ministry.

The journey for Church House began in November 2020 when Newcastle Diocese registered to become an Eco Diocese. Eco Diocese is part of the wider Eco Church awards, and encourages churches to participate in the scheme and demonstrate commitment to caring for God's creation. The Diocese of Newcastle is working towards a bronze Eco Diocese award, through more environmentally-friendly management of our buildings, land, diocesan funds and staff training.

As a part of this we began to consider how Church House could be greener, and undertook the Eco Church survey to see what improvements we could make. You can [take a look at the survey](#) and try this for your church [here](#).

The first step for Church House for the buildings section of the survey was to reduce our



> Church House in Percy Main, North Shields serves as the home for our diocesan staff

energy use. In early 2021, LED lighting was installed throughout the building. LED lighting is much more energy efficient and converts over 90 per cent of energy, and emits very little heat. This means LED lightbulbs need far less energy to produce the same amount of light as a traditional bulb. In Church House the lights in the washrooms and some corridors now switch on and off automatically as well, to save energy usage.

You may have heard a lot about 'going net zero carbon' in the news after COP26 in Glasgow. The Diocese of Newcastle is also aiming to go net zero by 2030 and Church House has achieved this for its energy use! Church House is on a 100 per cent renewable electricity tariff, and earlier this year switched to 100 per cent biogas tariff as



well, as such our energy use is carbon net zero.

Another highlight has been the installation of an electric vehicle charging point (for two vehicles) available for staff and visitors to use. It has been fantastic to see the charge point being used and to be able to provide this as an option for lower carbon travel.

The great thing about the Eco Church survey is that it suggests [different actions you could take and there is helpful advice and resources for how to do this](#). In a time of unprecedented environmental stresses, Eco Church aims to help churches respond to God's mandate to human beings to care for his creation, by integrating environmental care throughout their church's life and mission. To find out more, visit the [Eco Church website](#)!

Webinars on environmental fundraising

THE Church of England is hosting a range of webinars to guide churches across the nation in achieving net zero carbon.

While the majority of these webinars are available through recordings [here](#), you can also tune in to live webinars themed on fundraising throughout March.

These March webinars aim to discuss the landscape of environmental fundraising, methods on how to fundraise effectively and outline more specific and intricate methods.

Split into three parts respectively, they will be hosted every Tuesday from 8 March, 12pm – 1.30pm. To register your attendance at one of these live webinars, or to learn more, please visit the Church of England's ['Webinars for getting to net carbon neutral'](#) webpage.

This extract is taken from an article written by Revd Canon Geoff Purcell Smith, Priest-in-Charge of St John's Shotley, about a recent visit to hospital which reignited some memories of his early ministry and led to Canonical Hour prayers.

WHEN I was a curate in the people's republic of South Yorkshire, before the days of data protection and safeguarding, a local member of the deanery was awarded an OBE for services to patients.

Each week he went through all the admission sheets for the Doncaster Royal Infirmary and sorted the names into the ecclesiastical parishes which each individual admitted came from and wrote to the parish priest.

In my parish, the Vicar coordinated a weekly hospital visit usually on the afternoon of the mid-week Eucharist and staff meeting.

A car full of us, there were four on the team, would drive to the hospital and fan out across the wards each armed with a list of names.

One particular Wednesday I called by the bedside of an elderly miner, injured in an accident at Hatfield Main Colliery. Breathing heavily through advanced pneumoconiosis. I introduced myself but he was singularly unimpressed by this callow youth, I was 24 years old, with long hair, denims and a dog collar.

He was too ill to show me the door but made it clear that he had no truck with religion, do gooders or the church in general.

So I moved on to the next person on my list leaving only the echo of a silent blessing.

A couple of weeks later there was a tentative knock on my door. I had never met the person before but he introduced himself as the son of the man I had visited in hospital.

His father had died and had asked the son to seek me out in order to ask me to take his funeral. Of course my response was to agree and we settled down to discuss dates and the order of the service.

Over the years since my curacy I have visited many parishioners in hospital and the nature and style of those visits followed a pattern. I would check with the hospital, I would arrange a time, I would visit, catch up on home and parish and I would say a short prayer or blessing.

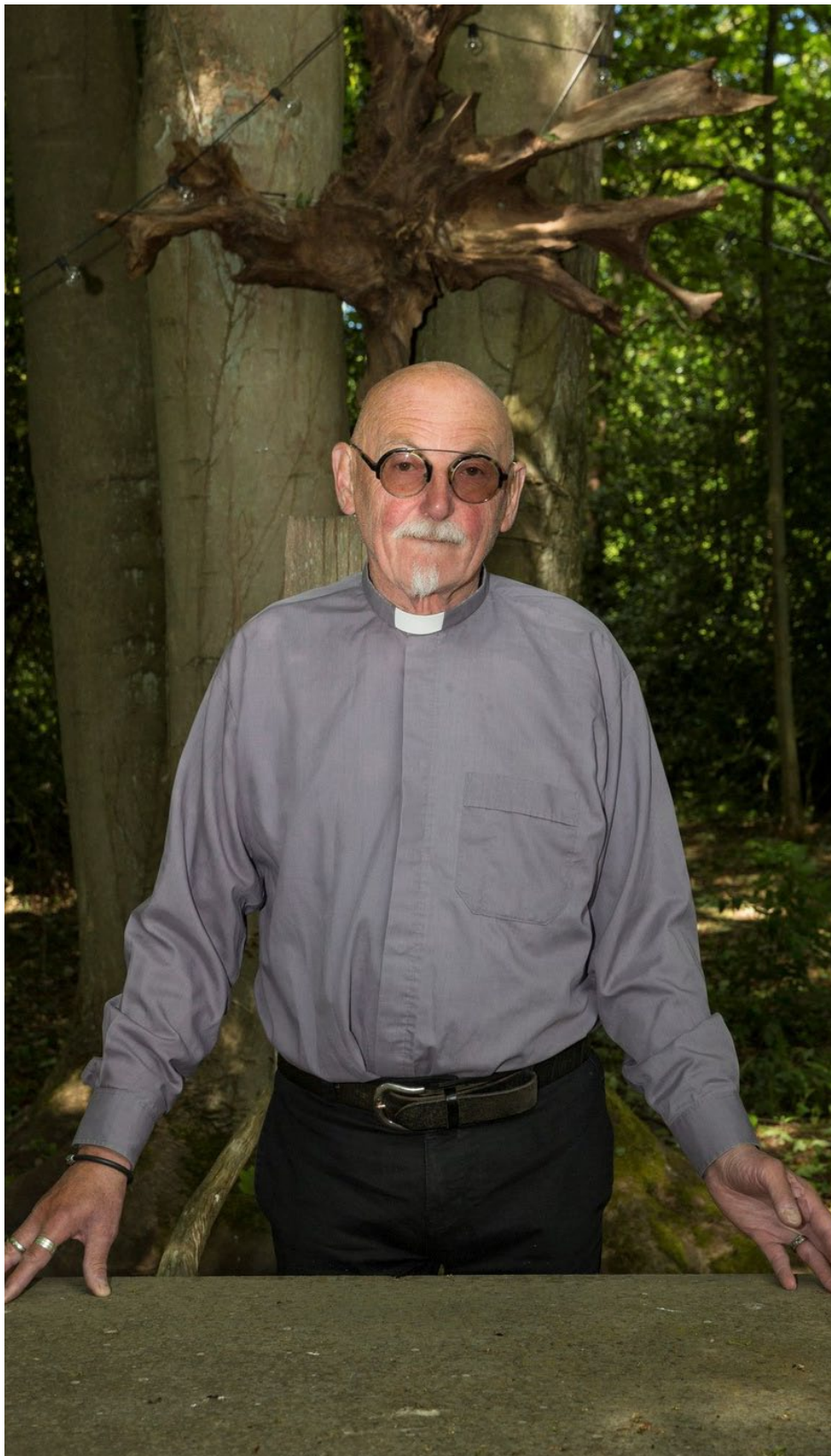
In my current role at one point I had both Churchwardens in hospital, one in Durham and one in Ward Five of the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle I was a regular visitor to both.

And then ironically I found myself as a patient in Ward Five. From pastor to patient.

My first challenge was to do with names and titles. As a Pastor I was the Revd Canon Geoff Smith. But since my remarriage and an agreement with my new wife who wished to retain her maiden name, we became the Purcell Smiths.

In hospital, as a patient, however, I was bed three and variously Geoff Purcell, Geoff Smith, Purcell Smith, but mainly Geoff. I was very aware of the risks of being mistaken for someone else, every procedure was preceded by the question 'date of birth?'

From pastor to patient



► **Revd Canon Geoff Purcell Smith**

I recalled the story of a doctor making a request on behalf of a patient: 'Wart on middle finger, please remove' for the patient to wake to find his whole middle finger missing.

Altogether I was in hospital for a month following a procedure called 'pancreaticoduodenectomy' or a 'Whipple Procedure'.

As a pastor I seek to preach and proclaim the concept of an incarnational faith. As St John's Gospel tells us: 'The word became flesh and dwelt amongst us'. Whilst the notion of incarnation speaks of lofty ideals, at the end of the day, well, flesh is flesh.

As a patient I had to get used to the idea of being flesh.

But whilst I was a patient I was still a priest, a pastor and during an email conversation with a parishioner I discovered that Radio Three was broadcasting the Canonical Hours and so I decided that, silently and under the cover of darkness, I would exercise as best as I might a ministry of prayer in my situation and for those I shared my situation with and for those who cared for us.

■ [Click here](#) for Geoff's full account of his experience and a poem he has written called 'Canonical Hours in Ward Five'

Book Review

Wicked Weather for Walking, a Passiontide Progress

Review by David Goodacre



THE title comes from a poem by Rudyard Kipling. The poem tells the story of Eddi, a first biographer of St Wilfrid, who was organising a midnight service one Christmas. No one came, except a donkey and a bullock; "wicked weather for walking," he reflected.

The title thus introduces the two themes of this series of Holy Week addresses given by Bishop Stephen Platten in 2021 - that we are to walk the pilgrim way of the cross whatever the 'weather' and that we should be encouraged by the examples of the early saints.

Drawing from his earlier book Pilgrims (Sacristy Press, 2020, £12.99) and following St Mark's account of the Passion, Bishop Platten invites us to go on pilgrimage in the spirit of St Brendan, setting out in faith without knowing where we are going. In the middle of the week, he contrasts the early missions of Columba and Aidan to Scotland and the North East with the Roman mission of Paulinus, all of them thinking their way of living the faith to be the only right one.

It required the Synod of Whitby, he reflects on Maundy Thursday, to bring the two sides together in Eucharistic fellowship. None of us knows what will happen as we tread the way, except that it will end in death - as it did for St Alban. On Good Friday he meditates on this moment of death, symbolised by the final end of any pilgrimage. He describes it as that liminal, threshold moment which transforms us and opens us to new possibilities.

Bishop Platten gave these addresses to the Parish of Holy Trinity and St Mary Berwick. We can join them and share their experience either by reading them during this coming Holy Week or over Lent.

Wicked Weather for Walking, a Passiontide Progress (Durham, Sacristy Press, 2021) by Stephen Platten is available for £7.99 [here](#).

Kids Matter



THE diocesan Children and Youth Team has joined forces with Kids Matter to help churches support disadvantaged families in their communities.

Kids Matter, whose aim is to build a future where every child in need is raised in a strong family, helps churches run short parenting courses by offering full guidance and support.

Join a Zoom call on Monday 7 February at 7pm to hear more about the parenting programme and to find out how churches can partner with Kids Matter to effectively support parents and carers.

■ For more information and to register for the session, email Rachel Scheffer at r.scheffer@newcastle.anglican.org



www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk

RELIGIOUS RESOURCE CENTRE WEBINARS

CREATING A PARISH/DEANERY RETREAT (AT HOME OR ONLINE)

THE Religious Resource Centre (RRC) will be hosting a conversation with Revd Gary Birchall on Tuesday 22 February, 6-7.30pm.

Lent can be a difficult time and the burden of creating and hosting a Lent course often falls to the ministers in the parish/deanery. It doesn't have to be this way! Come along and hear Gary share the why, how, when and who of 'at home' retreats, inspired by his churches' retreats throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Please book [here](#).

FAITH IN THE TOWN: THE CHURCH IN TIMES OF SOCIAL CRISIS

The RRC will also host a conversation with Dr Kate Gibson and Dr Kate Christopher on Wednesday 2 March, 6-7.15pm.

In this session you will learn how historical sources and objects from the 18th century can help us understand the landscape of faith as we know it, and use this to tackle contemporary anxieties and concerns. Please book [here](#).



> Revd Gary Birchall



> Dr Kate Gibson

Lockdown project traces village history

A RETIRED Reader has written a book chronicling the historic importance of a Northumbrian village.

Robert Peers, a former Reader in the parishes of Bywell St Peter, Stocksfield and Mickley St George, spent lockdown consolidating years of research to pen his biographical account of Bywell which lies on the north bank of the River Tyne between Newcastle and Hexham.

The book charts the role Bywell has played in the story of Northumberland, the wider region and whole of the UK - from being home to a Scottish king and site of a consecration of a bishop to the founding of Oxbridge colleges, the devastation caused by the Great Flood of 1771, and the role Bywell plays in Northumberland today.

Robert, who lived all his working life in Northumberland and now lives in Perth, said: "It has been a great honour to spend the last 10 years researching and compiling a book on this fascinating place.

"On becoming Licensed Lay Minister for the parishes of Bywell, Stocksfield and Mickley



> The Hon Wentworth Beaumont and author Robert Peers

my interest was sparked first in St Peter's church, then in the other significant buildings at Bywell.

"Lockdown provided the opportunity for me to gather the fragments I had already placed on a website, conduct further research and try to knit it all together into a story of the whole landscape. I hope that others will enjoy learning about Bywell's significance and perhaps take up the challenge of solving some of the unanswered questions that still exist."

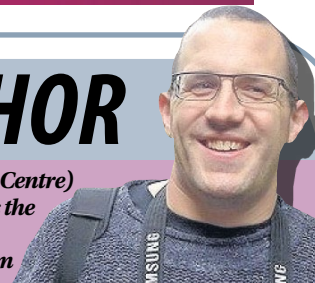
Lord Allendale's son, The Hon Wentworth Beaumont - who provided the foreword to the book, said: "I have always considered myself extraordinarily lucky to have grown up at Bywell. It is a magical place, combining outstanding natural beauty with a long and fascinating history.

"Bywell has evolved over the centuries, and yet, despite the extraordinary changes so brilliantly documented in this book, it has remained at heart a secluded patch of arcadia, untouched by the modern world. I am so pleased Robert has recorded the story of Bywell so fastidiously. It has certainly enhanced my understanding of the place where I grew up, and I hope it will be enjoyed by many others and for years to come."

■ 'The Story of Bywell - A Historical Landscape', designed and produced by Stocksfield-based Offstone Publishing and supported by Allendale Estates, is priced at £9.95 and is available from local independent book shops, Stocksfield Village Store, and online via [The Northumbrian](#) or [Northern Heritage](#).

LIKE A METAPHOR

Tim Hardy (formerly of the Religious Resources Centre) writes at www.timbo-baggins.co.uk and spends the rest of his time working in a library, raising his daughter and riding a bike around Birmingham



GOOD FRIDAY GOATISHNESS

LOOKING at the news these days leaves me feeling isolated, helpless, and angry. Everything feels a little bit darker every day and the news reports grind on and on.

As I walked around the block this evening, I reflected on where it felt like God was in all of this and came back to my usual: "He's in it with us. And in the crucifixion Christ entered into the darkest of the dark."

So, as I walked, I thought a bit more about Jesus and how the incarnation was God becoming fully human, identifying completely with humanity, and how the crucifixion was as bad as things got and wondered how much he might identify with my responses outlined above.

"My God, my God! Why have you abandoned me?" more or less answers the first point. Whilst he could have summoned twelve legions of angels, Jesus chose to surrender that power and suffer all that was thrown at him. Angry? Wanting to see those responsible receiving their just reward? Not so much. Instead, he prayed: "Father forgive them, they know not what they do."

Elsewhere and earlier Jesus did talk of judgement, of the separation of those who had done-or-not-done to-or-for the "least of these" who would, also unknown to themselves, have done-or-not-done to-or-for Jesus himself. My hope and trust is, at least for my own

sake, that the goat-ish are included in that Good Friday prayer.

It's all very well my worrying about the ongoing state of things - things beyond my control or influence - but I would do better to look for the "least of these" wherever I may encounter them and be prepared to respond to Jesus in them, however veiled in their flesh, he may appear.

It's very rare that I carry cash (or even a cash card, which, in addition to making my pockets more streamlined and less clanky, means I have to apologise to Big Issue sellers far more often than I used to - I've yet to encounter one who has a contactless set up.

I always see the food-bank donation bins as I go into the supermarket and fully intend to buy something from their request list but as I shop, my mind concentrates on my own list and I leave past the same bins with a gnawing sense of guilt and nothing to contribute.

These are things I can do something about. I've decided to make sure I always have cash on me - taking a tenner out of the bank at the start of the week and making sure I don't spend it on myself so it's there if the opportunity arises. I know I'll never remember to donate whilst I'm shopping, so I've set up a standing order to the Trussell Trust.

Wishing to avoid judgement is not the point, I believe that's mostly out of our hands, but we can try to love the one who prays for our forgiveness wherever and in whoever we meet him.

Noticeboard

Thursday 27 January, 10 March (and more), 4pm. Learning Thursdays Series: Citizens UK Churches' Community of Practice.

Hosted by Alison Webster, Citizens UK's Mission Theologian in Residence, this event will explore elements of Community Organising through a theological lens, building resources and tools to support clergy, lay people and church institutions. More information is available [here](#).

Thursday 3 February. Ramada Solihull, Birmingham. Simpler, Humbler, Bolder: Life Events in the Mixed Ecology.

Rooted and grounded in real lives and real faith, this conference will consider how doing things together has a real impact. You'll think about how Life Events are a key part of parish life and reflect on being humbler in your approach, simpler in your message and bolder to share the good news with others. Tickets are £55 and lunch/refreshments will be served. [Click here](#) for more information.

Monday 7 February, 2.30pm. St Gabriel's Parish Centre. Julian Meeting.

The Julian Meeting will start with a brief reading or piece of music, which will lead into a 30-minute silent contemplative prayer. After this, attendees are encouraged to have tea or coffee and a conversation. All are welcome, with more information available at stgabriel.heaton@gmail.com.

Wednesday 16 February, 12-1pm. Online. National Parenting Initiative event.

The National Parenting Initiative is a UK Christian charity with a vision to see churches support families in their community. This free event will feature speakers from parenting organisations such as 'Parenting for Faith' and 'Who Let the Dads Out', providing resources to help you empower families in your area. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

Sunday 6 March, 3.30pm. King's Hall, Newcastle University. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Bach Choir concert.

The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Bach choir will have its forthcoming show playing Handel's 'Dixit Dominus', Vivaldi's 'Magnificat' and Lalande's 'Super Flumina Babilonis'. Full details and tickets are available [on its website](#) and this promotional poster [here](#).

Thursday 24 March, 6.45 - 8.45pm. Brunswick Methodist Church. Sixth Annual Open Lecture, with Revd Dr Peter Francis.

Revd Dr Peter Francis, Warden of Gladstone's Library in Wales, will give the Progressive Christianity Network, Newcastle Group's sixth open lecture. Peter has recently published 'The Widening Circle of Us', which will be the basis for his address. Tickets are £5, and you can learn more [here](#).

Changemakers Supporter Conference: Real People, Real Change

By Helen Cunningham, Church Engagement & Fundraising Officer (North East & Cumbria) **christian aid**



> Climate Campaigners at St Paul's Cathedral

PICTURE: CHRISTIAN AID / ROBIN PRIME

FOLLOWING the success of last year's inaugural online Changemakers Supporter Conference, Christian Aid supporters across the country will be joining together for an online conference on 20-25 February 2022 on the theme of 'Real People, Real Change'.

This is an exciting opportunity to be inspired by stories from Christian Aid partners in Zimbabwe, who are facing the daily reality of the climate crisis. You can also share ideas around fundraising for Christian Aid Week, campaigning for climate justice and prayer.

Whether you join the conference for one session or for the whole week, you'll feel equipped to be a

changemaker in 2022 and join a movement for change this Christian Aid Week.

Are you wondering what Climate Justice campaigning over the last year has achieved and what you can do now? Then join the 'Climate Campaigning beyond COP26' session. Or be inspired by Christian Aid's Ambassadors and frontline activists in 'Whose Prophetic Voice?'

Other sessions cover a wide range of stimulating topics, including online Bible study with CREAS (Christian Aid partner in Argentina) and exciting new ways of fundraising and promoting your Christian Aid Week events. You can also meet other supporters from your area to share ideas and experiences: join us

for our regional gathering on 22 February at 7.30pm.

Last year's participants were full of praise, saying: "It's rekindled my enthusiasm and inspired me to do more to raise awareness of climate change and try to get more people in supporting CA campaigns," "I appreciated the value of hearing other people's ideas and experiences, and the chance to think about challenges together" and "The ministry of Jesus - a rebel with a cause - it's still relevant today!"

If you support Christian Aid or volunteer to encourage others to give, act and pray during Christian Aid Week, then this event is for you. For more information and to sign up, [click here](#).

Peter Schofield RIP



> Peter Schofield

By Bryan Vernon

PETER Schofield, who was the face of Christian Aid in the North East from 1976 to 1997, died in September last year.

He was a passionate advocate for justice for what was then called the Third World before the phrase was replaced with Less Developed Nations and more recently the Global South.

He endorsed the development of these expressions that increasingly recognised the dignity of those who benefited from Christian Aid's work.

He was a gifted speaker and preacher, both in content and delivery: his mellifluous voice enhanced his message. Many will remember him as a trusted confidant and a safe ear for troubled clergy and others.

He was a generous person both in his hospitality and in his assessment of people and had the gift of encouraging others. His life was rooted in God's love, and he reflected this unselfconsciously.

Peter inspired a group of university students who donated the profits from their performances of Joseph, Godspell and Jesus Christ Superstar to Christian Aid. A later production of Jack the Ripper left Peter with the memory of a faithful elderly supporter of Christian Aid coming up to him in the interval and asking, "Peter, what has this to do with Christian Aid?" He cherished this story with his characteristic sense of fun.

He was an active member of Christ Church, North Shields where he was held in great affection. Until very recently he could be found at the Saturday Market at Tynemouth Station where he was known and appreciated by many stallholders for his cheerfulness and concern for their welfare.

Pray for Karen, his wife, for his children, Martin and Alison, for Daniel and Shahab, for whom, with typical generosity, he treated as his own, and for his sister Judith. He has left a deep hole in their lives and the lives of many others, but it is filled with warm memories.

A taste of Scandi living



> The group spent a week in beautiful Norway

THE International Community of Aidan and Hilda arranged a successful trip to Norway for a group of clergy and youth workers last autumn.

Revd Ray Simpson and Revd Graham Booth, Guardians of

the Community of Aidan and Hilda, co-led the week-long visit to an island retreat house near Lillesand.

The group explored how the Way of Jesus may take root among new cultures and young people.

MONTHLY E-BULLETIN

HAVE you signed up to our monthly Diocesan e-Bulletin? Delivered straight to your inbox on the last Friday of each month, the e-Bulletin features the latest news, information, upcoming events and resources for the Diocese as well as our monthly Prayer Diary.

You can sign-up at www.bit.ly/ebulletin-resub or via our Facebook page [@nldiocese](https://www.facebook.com/nldiocese)