

# LINK

The newspaper for the Diocese of Newcastle



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## Resource Church: 'We cannot wait for the doors to reopen'



> The stunning new font will be a focal point for new visitors to the church



> Plans for St Thomas' renovations have been underway since November 2019



> The beautiful stained-glass windows of St Thomas'

MAJOR works to transform St Thomas' Newcastle into a Resource Church hub for our Diocese are nearing completion.

As reported previously in Link, work began in early 2021 to completely redevelop the iconic landmark, which sits in the heart of the city opposite Haymarket, close to both Newcastle and Northumbria universities.

The environmentally-friendly renovation has been thoughtfully planned with a focus on accessibility, aesthetics and flexibility – and as the finishing touches are applied, the impressive results already speak volumes.

Revd Ben Doolan, Master of St Thomas', said: "We are absolutely delighted with the renovations of St Thomas' Church. We cannot wait for the doors to reopen so we can serve the city and community of Newcastle from this fantastic building.

"As we proclaim the good news of Jesus and serve the city we pray that the St Thomas' church family will play our part in growing church and bringing hope."

St Thomas' was launched as a Resource Church in 2019 following a successful bid to the national Church as part of the Diocese's 'growing church bringing hope' vision.

Since then – as well as seeing its congregation grow from 15 to around 190 – the church has helped to resource mission and ministry around the Diocese, including planting an Eden Team in Byker to support Mission Initiative Newcastle East (MINE) churches.

The redevelopment of St Thomas' will help catalyse more resourcing in the future, with flexible space on the ground floor allowing for services and gatherings of up to 400 people.

A youth work space has been created on the ground floor, whereas upstairs the balcony area – once home to tiered pews – has been transformed into a community and learning space, and an open-plan office.

Built in the late 1820s by celebrated architect John Dobson, the building has seen a number of changes over the years including the addition of Victorian pews, tiling and oak panelling.

When planning the new-look interior, design firm Doonan Architects and the St Thomas' team were inspired by Dobson's original vision for the church.

Ben said: "Our aim was to return the church to how John Dobson originally intended, and so we decided to remove the clutter introduced by some of the later design features.

"But we've made sure to repurpose, restore or move material around, so that we retain the important heritage features of this incredible church."

The pews have been up-cycled into new furniture while the oak panelling has been repurposed to create two side rooms on the ground floor, and the Victorian minton tiling has been lovingly restored.

One of the most striking additions to St Thomas' is a meticulously-detailed walk-in font, designed in the shape of a Celtic cross.

"We didn't have a font before, and we knew we wanted one where an adult could be fully submerged," added Ben.

"The steps on either side symbolise the person stepping out of their old life and into their new life with God.

"To get it finished we need to add glass panels with light underneath – which will illuminate the feature. We wanted something that was practical but also a piece of art."

In an effort to make St Thomas' greener, the church has introduced an environmentally friendly biomass boiler, double glazing to the windows and extra layers of insulation to the roofing and floor.

Improved accessibility has been a key concern throughout the planning stages – St Thomas' will now feature an elevator to reach the upstairs learning space; a chair lift to reach the office and levelling out the downstairs, with no steps from street level.

The transformation of St Thomas' Church will be complete in the near future, with renovation updates available [on its website](#), or by following its [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts. Service information is [available here](#).



**Bishop's Diary***March*

This is not a full list of the Bishop's engagements, but includes the items we think might be of particular interest to you.

**Bishop of Berwick**

- 6th Visit to Preach and Preside, Vacancy Cover at Monkseaton St Mary's, Tynemouth Deanery  
Commissioning Service for Anna Chaplains at Newcastle Cathedral  
Confirmation Service at Jesmond Parish Church, Newcastle Deanery
- 7th **Meeting of the North East Churches Acting Together trustees**
- 8th Meeting of the Bishop's Council
- 9th **Meeting of the Bishop's Senior Staff Team**  
**Guest speaker/question and answer session at Holy Cross Church, Newcastle West Deanery**
- 10th Meeting with Training Incumbents
- 14-16th **Bishop's Meeting in Cambridge**
- 17th Meeting with Training Incumbents
- 20th **Visit to Preach and Preside, Vacancy Cover Longbenton St Mary Magdalene Church, Newcastle East Deanery**
- 21st Meeting of Northern Church Leaders
- 22nd **Meeting of the College of Canons at Newcastle Cathedral**
- 24th Meeting of the House of Bishop's
- 26th **Guest speaker and Eucharist Service for Candidates in Discernment**
- 29th Meeting of the Area Deans and Bishop's Senior Staff Team
- 30th **Attending Deacon's Day at Newcastle Cathedral**

**Vacancy for the Bishop of Newcastle**

THE Vacancy in See Committee has elected six of its members to serve on the Newcastle Crown Nominations Commission.

The commission is responsible for nominating the next Bishop of Newcastle and is scheduled to meet on 7 June and 18 to 19 July.

The six elected members from the Vacancy in See Committee, who can be contacted at [vis@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:vis@newcastle.anglican.org), are Revd Yvette Daniel, Revd Canon Ian Flintoft, Liz Kerry, John Marshall, Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth and the Ven Rachel Wood.

Further information about the Vacancy in See Committee and the CNC can be found [here](#).

**Gospel Readings***March*

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1st <b>Mark 10.28-31</b>                   | 16th Matthew 20.17-28            |
| 2nd Matthew 6.1-6,<br>16-21 or John 8.1-11 | 17th <b>Luke 16.19-end</b>       |
| 3rd <b>Luke 9.22-25</b>                    | 18th Matthew 21.33-43, 45-46     |
| 4th Matthew 9.14-15                        | 19th <b>Matthew 1.18-end</b>     |
| 5th <b>Luke 5.27-32</b>                    | 20th Luke 13.1-9                 |
| 6th Luke 4.1-13                            | 21st <b>Luke 4.24-30</b>         |
| 7th <b>Matthew 25.31-end</b>               | 22nd Matthew 18.21-end           |
| 8th Matthew 6.7-15                         | 23rd <b>Matthew 5.17-19</b>      |
| 9th <b>Luke 11.29-32</b>                   | 24th Luke 11.14-23               |
| 10th Matthew 7.7-12                        | 25th <b>Luke 1.26-38</b>         |
| 11th <b>Matthew 5.20-26</b>                | 26th Luke 18.9-14                |
| 12th Matthew 5.43-end                      | 27th <b>Luke 15.1-3, 11b-end</b> |
| 13th <b>Luke 13.31-end</b>                 | 28th John 4.43-end               |
| 14th Luke 6.36-38                          | 29th <b>John 5.1-3, 5-16</b>     |
| 15th <b>Matthew 23.1-12</b>                | 30th John 5.17-30                |
|  | 31st <b>John 5.31-end</b>        |

**Anna Chaplain hosts care home service**

*Joan Grenfell, an Anna Chaplain in Jesmond, shares how she celebrated Candlemas this year at one of her local care homes.*

I WAS able to lead worship in Craghall Care Home, for the first time in a long while, with nine residents present. I offered a service for Candlemas since they had missed it the previous week.

A service of light seemed a most appropriate way back in. The residents were clearly moved by it, as demonstrated by their tears. I am looking forward to re-engaging with residents and staff in the coming weeks.

I will also soon be engaging with two other care homes in the parish, both of which have expressed

an interest in offering Anna Chaplain ministry to their residents and staff. I'm very excited!

Candlemas is the season when we celebrate the story of Simeon and Anna from St Luke's gospel.

Anna was a long-time widow who found a new way of living at 84 years old, and is an archetypal chaplain for us today! One can imagine her greeting the holy family and chatting to them in just the way an Anna Chaplain might do in similar circumstances.

We are proud that the prophetess Anna has inspired Anna Chaplaincy and that each Candlemas we remember her story and that of the baby Jesus, the much longed-for Messiah and as Simeon described him: 'A light to lighten the Gentiles' (Luke 2:32, KJV).

**Comings & Goings****Appointments**

Revd James McGowan, currently Vicar of St James and St Basil Fenham, has also been appointed Area Dean of Newcastle West Deanery

Revd Allison Harding, currently Vicar of Newburn, has also been appointed Assistant Area Dean of Newcastle West Deanery.

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

with Henshaw

**Resignations**

Revd Canon Ian Flintoft has resigned as Priest in Charge (Interim Minister) of Cowpen St Benedict effective from 28 February, 2022. He will continue to be Vicar at Newsham and Horton

**Retirements**

Revd Ian Chadwick, Associate Priest (SSM) at Embleton with Rennington & Rock, Longhoughton (including Boulmer) with Howick and Lesbury with Alnmouth will retire effective from 17 April, 2022.

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For advertising rates and deadlines see [www.newcastle.anglican.org/link](http://www.newcastle.anglican.org/link).  
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# Bishop's Christmas Appeal raises over £3k

**B**ISHOP Mark has praised the "enthusiastic and compassionate response" to our Bishop's Christmas Appeal which has raised over £3,300 for two charities.

The appeal, launched in early December by Bishop Mark, saw a generous influx of online and cash donations in aid of West End Refugee Service (WERS) and Walking With.

Both organisations are dedicated to helping asylum seekers and refugees in North Tyneside, Newcastle and surrounding areas.

The donations - split equally between the two charities - will support WERS, based in Newcastle's West End, and Walking With, based in Wallsend, in their vital work and ongoing commitment to transform lives and relieve hardship.

Bishop Mark said: "My huge thanks to all who contributed to the Bishop's Christmas Appeal 2021. Your support has enabled the brilliant ongoing work of WERS and Walking With as they serve some of the most vulnerable and needy people in the North East.

"It has been humbling to see your enthusiastic and compassionate response. Please continue to pray for their staff and volunteers and those they work alongside."

Melissa Younger, WERS Finance and Operations Manager, offered Link readers this kind message: "We are all extremely grateful for the astonishing amount that was raised by the Bishop's Christmas Appeal this year in aid of WERS.

"The amount raised went directly to our hardship fund which supports our destitute clients. These people seek sanctuary here in the North East and have no access to any state support and experience great poverty.



➤ Bishop Mark met with staff, volunteers and service users of WERS in late 2021

"Bishop Mark visited us at WERS before Christmas and met some of the staff, volunteers and clients and even helped to make up some of the Christmas parcels for our clients.

"We are immensely grateful for the ongoing support."

Walking With - made up of a small staff team and more than 40 volunteers - provides a food bank and clothing bank service. Between July 21 and January 22, the charity issued 775 requests for food and 442 requests for clothing.

Walking With helps refugees and asylum seekers to complete forms and assists in making telephone calls, and sometimes accompanies clients to appointments. It provides English Language support, and social and

recreational activities to help them integrate into the local community.

The charity also works with schools and young people to explain about the realities of asylum seeking, with the aim of improving social cohesion in local communities, and to reduce the chances of racial misunderstanding, prejudice, or radicalisation.

Joan Hoult, Chief Executive of Walking With, added: "We are so happy and privileged to receive the Bishop's Christmas Appeal funds, this will enable us to continue our much-needed work and support for our current clients and new arrivals into North Tyneside.

"Thank you so much for supporting our charity, we appreciate every donation which is sent to us."



## Bishop's Letter

With Bishop Mark Wroe

IT'S rarely been easy to be a follower of Jesus, in any generation, and looking out of my window at the winter storms lashing the trees and buildings round about, and listening to the news with its warnings of war, and the latest Coronavirus and cost of living statistics, the world feels pretty bleak. At the same time, I am convinced of the good news of Jesus Christ who was in the boat with his disciples in the face of the storm and spoke incredible words of peace and hope.

As I consider the storms of our world, real and metaphorical, I remain profoundly challenged about how we can better share the good news of Jesus Christ in the communities we serve. This issue has been at the heart of the Next Steps work we have been doing as a Diocese, and was the backbone of a significant bid we made in the autumn to the national Church for funding to invest in our people, lay and ordained, as we seek to build sustainable momentum around our mission and ministry. Unfortunately, our bid wasn't successful, but we still need to take our Next Steps in the direction to which we believe that God is calling us.

Working out how we can move forward is challenging for all of us. We haven't been in this situation before, and the way forward is not altogether clear. We need to take our Next Steps in faith, rooted in our calling as God's pilgrim people - called to follow Jesus, even into the wilderness. The Scriptures show the wilderness to be uncomfortable, but it can have much to teach us about who we are, and about who God is. Significantly Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness before he began his ministry, which we echo in our Lenten journey before the celebration of Easter.

Lent is a time when we choose to follow Jesus into the wilderness, prayerfully reflecting on our lives, and challenging ourselves about the things which prevent deeper relationships with others and with God. It is a time to listen for God's voice, and to test our dreams and plans. Like the storm, the wilderness isn't a comfortable place to be, but it is an important part of our spiritual journey. Here we can learn to grapple with God about the hard things of our lives, and to open ourselves to God's healing and transformational love. It's a place where we find ourselves 'walking off the map' into the unknown, and the prayers of the Psalmist become our own, 'Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!' (Psalm 130).

Jesus shows us that in the midst of the wilderness, or in the storms, there is hope, and is calling us to take our Next Steps, in trust, and with faith. This Lent, may we know this hope more deeply for ourselves, for our churches, and for our Diocese. Most importantly, may we know this for the communities we serve, and for our world.

+ Mark

## All you need is love



**HEART-SHAPED biscuits and a love-themed sing-a-long greeted the children of St John's Backworth at their Valentine's 'Toddler Church'.**

**Each child received two biscuits - lovingly hand-made by church member Barbara Golightly - with an accompanying Bible message about love.**

**The service, titled 'All you need is love', had the children singing a range of love-related songs, accompanied by Revd Tim Mayfield and his guitar.**

## Churches launch new community project with Valentine's event

AS part of a new project based out of Rising Sun Country Park, located in Benton in the heart of North Tyneside, five neighbouring churches are working together to aid and support their community.

The churches involved - St Mark's Shiremoor, St John's Killingworth, Church of the Good Shepherd Battle Hill, St John's Wallsend and Wallsend Salvation Army - form a new project called 'Rising Sun Neighbours'.

Their first event - a Valentine's Activity Trail - hosted a range of friendly activities such as selfie frames, bird feeders, stone painting and treasure hunts, and welcomed over 200 people.

Revd Dr Rae Caro, Priest-in-charge at St Mark's Shiremoor said: "We are building friendships between the churches, celebrating the beautiful surroundings of the Rising Sun and looking to find new ways of being good neighbours to our communities."

Revd Julie Mooney, Vicar at Church of the Good Shepherd, Battle Hill, added:



"This is a fantastic opportunity for outreach to the people who visit the country park, as well as the people living in the new estates in the vicinity.

"It is wonderful that these five churches are working in partnership on this initiative, and by doing so we hope to spread the Good News of Jesus even further."

Contact information for each of the five churches involved is [available here](#).



# Love Grace Bags - church and community in action



**By Diane Bayley, member of Holy Saviour's Tynemouth**

**M**ANY will be aware through media reports, of the murder of Grace Millane in New Zealand in December 2018 on the eve of her 22nd birthday.

Grace's cousin, Elizabeth Lee, is a member of the congregation at Holy Saviours Church, Tynemouth, and Grace was one of her bridesmaids when she married in the church in August 2012.

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

Grace was a lover of nice handbags, and so her family took things one step further working alongside a local women's refuge to fill handbags to give to women who are fleeing from domestic violence and seeking refuge. An initial target of 50 bags was the aim but this was surpassed because of the generosity and offers of help they received. Further appeals have run in New Zealand, Singapore, USA and Canada and have resulted in well over 11,000 women receiving a 'Love Grace' handbag.

Domestic violence towards women, as we are aware, is a huge issue and we hear it being reported time and time again in the news and most recently with the Sarah Everard case. Cases of domestic violence during the lockdown increased massively and therefore so did the pressure on refuges.

At Holy Saviours we set a challenge at the beginning of December to collect good quality handbags and toiletries and then make up bags for local refuges. We felt that there were a lot of unused handbags and toiletries bought as gifts and never used, lurking in cupboards. It was also leading up to Christmas and offers were there in the shops - 'buy one get one free' - and unwanted gifts were about to be received. It seemed a good time to launch our appeal.

This was also a double challenge, to work alongside the community and ask people not only to donate but to support the appeal by giving their time and help to pack the bags. The appeal went out via

Facebook groups, WhatsApp groups, social and friendship groups and two shops in Tynemouth Village - Fezziwigs and Artichoke - got on board and offered to be drop-off points for donations.

This was to be very much about Church and community coming together and strengthening local links, showing the church in action and most importantly supporting vulnerable people.

We set Sunday 6 February as the date to come together with our friends and neighbours to make up the bags and get them ready for distribution to women's refuges. The parish hall was set up the night before to enable easy packing and members of the church volunteered to supply refreshments on the day.

What a response we have had. We had a hall full of bags, toiletries, scarves, perfume, make up and more! The generosity and kindness of others was overwhelming. The hall had a buzz as people excitedly chose things for the bags they were packing and interacted with those alongside them. Our church - community relationship was working well and so was the packing. In our first hour we had put together 50 bags.

Each bag was completed with a scarf tied to the handles and a gift tag which simply said 'Love Grace' - a copy of Grace's own handwriting and her floral artwork.

When Elizabeth and I first planned the event, we were reluctant to put a figure on the number of bags we would make up but felt 70 was being optimistic. By 2pm on Sunday we had used all our supplies - and that included a trip to the supermarket for more essential items - we had made up a total of 157 bags!

We had a very busy full-on day - making new friends within our community and strengthening existing links - and we hope to build on this. We hope that we have been able to make a difference in the lives of others by living out our Christian faith. By Monday lunchtime we had already seen 90 bags go to local refuges - such is the demand locally! The making up of bags and collections will continue and a big appeal is being looked at as an annual event in Tynemouth and for Church and community to grow together.

**■ To learn more about the Love Grace handbag appeal, you can visit its website or Facebook page.**

## #LiveLent resources

THE national Church has released a wealth of resources for this year's Live Lent theme 'Embracing Justice'.

In this edition of Link, we explore the resources on offer for Lent and Holy Week and how you can access them.

### Printed resources

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

### Study support

There is free online support for groups studying the Archbishop of Canterbury's book - including in-depth interviews with Dr Selina Stone, Bishop Michael Curry, Ruth Valerio and others exploring different aspects of justice. The Big Church Read is also

## LIVE LENT

### Embracing JUSTICE

offering free downloadable discussion questions and short video introductions for each week from Isabelle Hamley.

### Online and digital

Digital daily reflections: #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 via a free app for Apple and Android devices, free email reflections, and audio on the Church of England's Smart speaker skills. The reflections run from Ash Wednesday, 2 March to Easter Day, 17 April.

Social media: daily reflections throughout Lent, and online national services exploring the themes of the daily reflections. A Church Near You: churches

can add services using Lent and Easter tags; Resource Hub features free customisable graphics, videos, hymns and images; and downloadable posters.

### Children and youth

Live Lent for Kids: an accompanying child's version of the Live Lent booklet is available which includes 40 actions for each day of Lent and one for Easter Day.

The Way UK: the Church of England is working with The Way, who create innovative faith-based video content by and for young people on Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. Their Lent and Easter content will include videos exploring work and money, prayer, and women in the story of Holy Week.

A Church Near You Youth: ACNY now has dedicated content for 11 to 18-year-olds. They can search on ACNY for events and places where they can meet other young people exploring their faith.

**■ For more information on Live Lent and the resources available, visit the Church of England website.**

## Church Army Lent resource pack

THE Church Army Lent Resource has been designed to give you and your church space and time each day throughout Lent to listen to God and reflect on the Bible.

Each pack contains 40 cards divided into Action Cards, Character Cards, Reflection Cards and Marks of Mission Cards.

Available as both free email reflections and a physical pack of cards, you can learn more about the resource [here](#).



## WaterAid Lent Appeal

WATERAID is inviting churches to join its annual Jars of Change Lent Appeal.

By giving something up for Lent and donating the money saved to WaterAid, churches can help bring clean water to communities around the world.

WaterAid has created a free resource pack that is available to order by post or to download, including fundraising ideas and Sunday School activities.

For more information and to order or download the free resources, please click [here](#).



## Children in the Shadows

THE Clewer Initiative has launched its new Lent 2022 resource 'Children in the Shadows', shining a light on the thousands of unseen children trapped in slavery in the UK and beyond.

Each week of Lent will focus on a different way in which modern slavery impacts children and includes definitions, statistics and insight from frontline experts.

Throughout the course, participants will work through Luke 18, discussing how Jesus' interactions and parables can inspire our lives.

Each session closes with a prayer to draw people's reflections



together and the words of two new hymns, written for The Clewer Initiative by Sheena Evans and Simon Hancock.

You can view the materials [here](#), and are encouraged to share amongst your church and in your community.



# The Oswin Project at Newcastle Cathedral

By Revd Fiona Sample,  
CEO of the Oswin Project

**I**N a debate in the House of Commons on 20 July 1910 Winston Churchill said: "The mood and temper of the public in regard to the treatment of crime and criminals is one of the most unfailing tests of the civilization of any country."

Currently, England is failing that test. We hold the unenviable record of having more individuals in prison than any other country in Europe and numbers are increasing - despite a slight drop due to the pandemic. Building new prisons is not the answer. Giving training and employment opportunities is.

The Oswin Project was founded, as our strap line indicates, to give second chances to those who have been in prison.

We are always asked about our name. Oswin was the lesser-known half-brother of King Oswald of Northumbria. If the Venerable Bede's writings are to be believed, Oswin 'loved justice above all things and spoke to prince and pauper in the same manner'.

The Oswin Project is slightly different from other organisations because our care is holistic. We build a bridge of opportunity between prison and outside, and are happy to get involved in almost anything that gives our clients, who we call Oswinners, second chances - as long as it's legal!

To start an Oswinners journey we run a bakery and cafe in HMP Northumberland. The goods baked there supply Café 16 in Newcastle Cathedral and 'graduates' from prison have the opportunity of a placement there.

We also have our flourishing 'Inside and Out' team, which decorates and maintains gardens/landscapes. Mentoring and supporting our Oswinners and employees alike is key to our success.



► Revd Fiona Sample

We have calculated that for every ten Oswinners who do not re-offend (and it is a rarity) we save the public purse - in effect you, the taxpayer - £1 million. Opportunity through training, volunteering and employment gives confidence and self-esteem.

On BBC Radio 4 a presenter recently asked those fulfilled and happy in their work to ring in. I would have if I could have, and suspect most of my colleagues would have joined me. This is because there is absolutely nothing better than playing a small part in giving someone a

future, transforming their lives, seeing them stand tall and seeing the impact on their family and the ripple that spreads out to communities and beyond.

Why should you be interested in our work? Leaving aside the estimated 200,000 children with a parent in prison, the huge cost to society and the £18.1 billion to the economy, the ever-growing prison population shows that locking people up simply does not stop crime (though I admit some individuals must be imprisoned to keep us all safe).

In a post-Brexit and post-Covid Britain, many areas need a workforce and prisoners need jobs. It is a simple equation, and everyone is a winner. Highstreet names such as Timpson, Greggs and Halfords benefit every day by recruiting ex-offenders. Giving somebody a second chance instils loyalty and commitment.

To succeed in our aims, we must change perceptions. We are holding a conference on Wednesday 2 March in Newcastle Cathedral with this theme. A panel of people who have experienced the transition from prison to work are guiding the day; speakers include the inspiration behind Project ReMake Kameel Khan, National Recruitment Ambassador for Timpson Darren Burns, Police and Crime Commissioner Kim McGuinness, New Futures Networks' Lance Harris, Deputy Director of HMP Northumberland Lindsay Blackmore, and CEO of the North East Chamber of Commerce John McCabe CEO.

I hope you might be able to join us! Tickets and more details are available on our [website](https://www.oswinproject.org.uk).

The retiring CEO of the Howard League for Penal Reform felt she had seen little change during her tenure. Reflecting on this she said if a Victorian returned to Britain in 2021 (when she retired) they would recognise most of the prisons but would be shocked at the lack of purposeful activity. It is time to bring about change.

## Legacies

GENEROSITY can exist in many ways, at many times, throughout our lives. From sharing love and God's word at baptisms, to cakes and raffle prizes at church fayres, generosity of spirit is a lifelong gift to our communities and parishes. What our churches are today is the result of the love and generosity of those who came before those worshipping today.

For most of us our churches are a huge part of our lives. We have friends we meet each week for worship, we pray about them during the week, we fundraise together, we sing together and we worship together.

We hold some of our most important moments - baptisms, weddings, and funerals - in these buildings. Our church family has been there for us at the lowest

By Leanne  
Conway-  
Wilcox,  
Generous  
Giving  
Adviser



of times and the happiest. We build things in our churches, not just study groups and services but community, love and kindness.

It can also continue after we are no longer here. Legacy giving is a wonderful way to leave a lasting gift. Many people leave a gift to a charity in their will - as a thank you for the work they do or to help them continue

that work. Gifts to our churches do the same thing, enabling churches to have the resources to continue their mission and ministry.

From allowing worship through music - via gifts towards organ repairs or hymn books - to celebrating the wonderful gift of creation with flower display stands, legacies help continue the mission of the church for generations to come.

Do you have any stories of gifts or projects created through legacies - maybe a prayer garden, church repairs, trainings, children's projects, or hymn books? We'd love to hear from you! Please get in touch with Leanne at [l.conwaywilcox@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:l.conwaywilcox@newcastle.anglican.org)

We're planning some training and drop in sessions in May to help churches in the Diocese talk about legacy giving - so watch this space.



NEWCASTLE  
CATHEDRAL

View  
from the  
Lantern

With Revd Jon Canessa, Lantern  
Initiative Lead at Newcastle Cathedral

## What is a 'Radical Welcome' and how is this different from any other sort of welcome?

IN the gospels we read that Jesus sends out his disciples in pairs to proclaim the Good News, directing them to stay where they are welcomed and shown hospitality. Jesus is quite clear that they should not waste time where their presence is not wanted: "If anyone does not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust from your feet."

Since the completion of the redevelopment work, made possible by support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Newcastle Cathedral has been considering the question, how do we offer a welcome to all our visitors, so they stay to be blessed by us as well as to be a blessing to us?

The cathedral is hugely grateful to its volunteer welcomers that are committed to embodying its core values of 'Radical Welcome', 'Inspiring Worship' and 'Empowering Worth'. Welcomers provide a visible presence, greeting everyone as they enter the building through its main West Entrance. Volunteer training looks at how we manage the tension between, 'All Are Welcome' and 'All Feel Safe'. This includes unconscious bias; rescuing behaviour and the drama triangle; personal safety and boundaries; trauma informed environments and responding to conflict and pastoral needs.

In centuries gone by, a fire was lit at night in the cathedral's lantern spire as a beacon to aid boats to navigate their way safely home up the River Tyne in the dark. Drawing upon this analogy, the cathedral's Lantern Initiative seeks to be a beacon of light to those visitors navigating difficult circumstances in life, such as those who are homeless or have refugee status, those living with addiction and poor mental health and those who are lonely or grieving.

'Radical Welcome' cannot only be a passive response, it must be proactive and an attempt to meet people where they are. If we are serious about offering hospitality for everyone, we will need to actively seek out and walk alongside those individuals and groups that have previously been alienated by the Church and wider society.

Through the work of the Lantern Initiative, the cathedral has been working with a group of women who have been through the criminal justice system. As a result of their past, their collective experiences have been impacted by being judged by others, by being denied access to certain opportunities and they carry a deep-rooted sense of not belonging. The trauma and abuse these women have been exposed to throughout their lives unsurprisingly means they value 'feeling safe' and are highly attuned to their environment. Their sense of the cathedral as a place of sanctuary where they are affirmed simply for who they are, has resulted in two exciting projects which the women are leading on.

We were delighted when one of the women recently expressed a desire to become a cathedral volunteer welcomer. Our safeguarding policies relating to volunteer recruitment necessitates checks and risk assessments that require disclosing some information about the individual's past. This was painful to put down on paper by the individual concerned and had the effect of triggering painful feelings and emotions for them, despite our best efforts to do this 'sensitively'. Reflecting on this afterwards has resulted in the individual offering to help us to re-design what we do, and how we do it, and better enables us to work in ways that are trauma informed. This way of working is messy and disruptive but when we work with (as opposed to for) people, something new is co-created that both parties own and are invested in, and everyone learns and is changed as a result.

'Radical Welcome' inevitably involves disruption and change but unless we are willing to embrace this, people will shake the dust from their feet and search for hospitality elsewhere.



## Alpaca fundraising at CofE school



STUDENTS and staff at All Saints Church of England First School, Morpeth welcomed a trio of alpacas this February.

As part of their nursery classes fundraising efforts for Hilltop Farm Animal Sanctuary, families were asked to send in donations in return for a pet and a walk with the alpacas.

Nicholas Reeson, Headteacher at All Saints said: "Our school's 'Faith in Action' group encouraged each class to support a chosen charity/good cause.

"This is a nice activity to help the Indigo (nursery) class with its fundraising for the sanctuary and it's an example of our 'together we flourish' vision."



# Living in Love and Faith

**H**AVE you taken a look at the **Living in Love and Faith resources** or completed the course yet? If not, there's still time to learn more and share your views!

LLF is a suite of resources created by the Church of England exploring identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. They are designed to encourage churches to take part in a process of learning and praying together.

After completing the five-session course or looking at the resources, people are invited to share their learning, insights and experience through this **questionnaire**, or by **responding creatively** as an individual or as a group.

The deadline for feedback is 30 April 2022 and will play a major part in influencing the House of Bishops' process of discernment and decision-making in relation to matters of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

Our diocesan-appointed LLF Advocate, Izzy McDonald-Booth is on hand to offer guidance and support to churches around LLF, particularly in helping parishes to facilitate courses.

In this edition of Link, we asked Ce Pacitti to share her experience of facilitating a LLF course at Gosforth Parish Church of St Nicholas and reflect on the outcomes.

### Why did your parish decide to run a LLF course?

We were interested to explore the material, to find out what the church had produced to help with the discussion of important issues, and to 'do our bit' to feed back. We were keen to have an opportunity (which was structured and supported) to think and pray together about how we as a church community treat each other and how wider society might think about what church teachings represent.

### How were you supported in facilitating the course?

As facilitator, I was supported by several others – my incumbent, two other members of the congregation, and I also knew that if I had any questions I could go to Izzy McDonald-Booth as the diocesan LLF advocate. The course materials and guide for facilitators were all very clear and helpful – the structure of the sessions was well organised with enough material simply to follow the videos if that works for your setting. Our group took these as a starting point and were keen to spend most of the time together in discussion.

### How did you set up the group and run the course?

We ran the course on Zoom – partly because of Covid restrictions at the time and partly because having already run a Pilgrim course and a Lent course in this way we had already set the boundaries and expectations that Zoom was a safe space to talk about important issues. Most, but not all, of the LLF group had been involved in one or both of these previous Zoom groups. We met on five consecutive Saturday mornings, there were around a dozen participants in our group ranging in age from 16 to 70-plus with a range of experiences to bring. The group found this a safe and respectful arena to voice their opinions and worries – the pastoral principles included in the course materials were a



➤ Ce Pacitti facilitated an LLF course in her parish

useful reminder each week to help focus the way we interacted with each other. We used break-out rooms to split into smaller groups and the participants found this a useful way to listen to each other and perhaps to voice things they might not have felt comfortable saying to the bigger group.

### Did you use the LLF resources to help group discussion? How accessible are the resources?

The LLF resources were a useful and accessible way to help with our group discussions. As we found our way through the course, following the theme of each session, we found that the materials provided an excellent starting point for the group to consider different issues but that we found it most valuable to spend our time together mostly in discussion. All participants were sent access to the online materials to look at them, if they wished, in their own time. As a group, we found the most helpful and moving material in the 'story' films – these made the material about 'real people' rather than abstract concepts. As a group we all agreed that hearing people's stories allowed us to engage more fully – they prompted group members to share their own stories too.

### How did you feedback following completion of the course and how was this process?

All of the group were encouraged to submit feedback on the LLF website – I sent them the link to fill in the survey. As group facilitator I found the process of sending feedback very user-friendly. We were pleased to think that our feedback will be taken on board as part of the House of Bishops discernment process for next steps. As a group we agreed that this was an opportunity for our 'quiet voices' to be heard as all too often it is only the 'loud voices' at either end of the debate which get any air time. We were interested to know if this feedback process would demonstrate a critical

mass of opinion in the church which has not so far been voiced publicly.

### How has taking part in LLF impacted your parish?

We rounded off the course with an evening service celebrating the learning we had experienced. This was a good way of sharing some of the readings and reflections with the wider congregation and it felt like a prayerful way to do this. Following the course feedback (which I have permission to share) from some of the group members included:

*"The LLF course opened my eyes to love in its purest form, and the role the church has to play in embracing people for the unique individual they truly are. It was a rich sharing experience, which emphasised learning and forward thinking."*

*"I thoroughly enjoyed my Saturday mornings when we were following the LLF course. [The] facilitator gave just the right amount of support and encouragement so it was comfortable to talk. The breakout rooms were good as it was great to talk to like-minded people in smaller groups, exploring very important issues. It also made us think what we could do as a church and how to move forward to ensure we continue to be an inclusive church."*

*"This was an opportunity for us to discuss difficult topics in a safe environment. I am so pleased to have been able to talk to people in break-out rooms in a very personal way. It was a delight to talk to open-minded, forward-thinking and intelligent people."*

*"Only good can come of this."*

■ **For more information about LLF, click [here](#) or visit the diocesan website for local information. If anyone would like to take part in diocesan facilitation training in March and April, please get in touch with Izzy.**



# 'It is a huge privilege to share in so many children's lives'

Founder of charity helping Palestine's destitute children reflects on his God-given mission

**W**HEN Malcolm Jones was 23 years old and training for ministry, he spent some time in Jerusalem.

Little did he know those short few months in 1965 would stay with him forever, and lead to a lifetime of service and care for some of the "most forgotten and needy" children in the world.

Now aged 80, Malcolm has been the guiding light of Practical Compassion for Destitute Children (PCDC) for the past 27 years.

Offering care and support to disadvantaged and impoverished youngsters in Palestine, PCDC has given thousands of children a helping hand when they have had nowhere else to turn.

"Children tell us we are the only charity they can approach directly when they are in distress," said Malcolm, who set up PCDC 30 years after his first visit to Jerusalem.

The charity now supports 172 children who, because of conflict, occupation and poverty, have been unable to attend school.

With the belief that good education can rescue children from the spiral of poverty and destitution, PCDC - working in 25 Palestinian schools - pays the children's educational fees.

The charity also gives access to doctors, dentists, psychiatric support, counselling, and provides food, clothes and shoes for the young people, many of whom are orphans.

Malcolm, in his role as Children's Coordinator, made sure each child's needs are met and worked closely with the children, their families, teachers and others to set up support networks for the stricken youngsters.

"We can take sick Palestinian children into Israel for treatment where often the parents are not permitted to do it. We take them and bring them

**> Malcolm with Kathleen Todd, of the Methodist Church in Haydon Bridge, who worked with PCDC for over 20 years, chatting with children in Hebron**

safely back to their parents," said Malcolm.

"Over the years, we have provided a prosthetic leg for one which had to be amputated, contacted doctors, dentists and surgeons throughout the country to get their help and services for children."

As a Christian and ordained priest, this far-reaching work is central to Malcolm's faith and his deep calling to help these children has been guided by the hand of God.

"I felt that He was asking me to lay each child's needs before Him and that He would provide the means to find a way," Malcolm recalled about his early days of starting-up the charity.

From a young age, Malcolm has had an unwavering desire to help children - before ordination, he taught at an 'Approved School' for boys who were no longer in mainstream education, and at the age of 21 became Britain's youngest House Father in the employment of the Home Office, supporting 35 "very disturbed teenagers".

Even throughout his ministry training in Lincoln, Malcolm volunteered his time to work with disadvantaged children in schools.

So when he was warned against speaking to the streetboys of Jerusalem on his first trip there in 1965, Malcolm's compassion and natural instinct to safeguard troubled young-

sters led him to ignore this advice.

"I went out and got to know them, and gradually gained their trust," he said.

"They took me to their lairs and homes, if they had homes. They were all refugees, bitter about what had happened to them, bypassed and ignored by pilgrims.

"I soon learned to love them and spent a lot of time with them. I never forgot them. One of them, Ibrahim abu Rakbeh, now aged 79, is still my friend and I talk with him and visit him often."

He always had the intention of returning to Jerusalem to help these young people who became his friends "but life took its different turnings" for Malcolm, who, after marrying Jennie in 1969, went on to live in Venezuela for a period as an oilfield chaplain before his ministry brought him back to the UK as a parish priest in 1975.

But Jerusalem was never far from Malcolm's thoughts. Thirty years after he first set foot in the sacred city, Malcolm returned to act as a tour guide for pilgrims and ended up fundraising for an orphanage.



**> Malcolm with James Kenyon, PCDC Secretary, and two siblings supported by the charity**



**> The charity provided this profoundly deaf child with very sensitive hearing aids so he can communicate with his teacher**

"Soon I realised that God was calling me to some kind of ministry, to support children not in a single institution, but an area," Malcolm recalled.

In the months and years that followed, Malcolm and a small team set up PCDC as a faith ministry, meaning they cannot appeal for money or donations on their own behalf. All donations can only be used for the children and any administrative costs must come from Gift Aid.

Incredibly - with the support of a loyal army of supporters and sponsors - PCDC has flourished since its inception in the 1990s.

"In one recent year we spent about £160,000 but the same amount came in. God has never broken His promise and we trust Him day by day," Malcolm added. "I am deeply grateful to all who help us."

As the charity continues its essential work in the Middle East, Malcolm is slowly stepping back from the day-to-day administration of PCDC and passing on the baton to the active board of trustees, who are planning to appoint a new chair

soon.

A post-pandemic visit to the West Bank is already being planned, so that the vital personal contact with PCDC and their schools and families can resume.

Malcolm will remain as a trustee, offering his guidance and knowledge to the new team who are dedicated to continuing the crucial work of the charity.

Reflecting on the achievements of the charity, Malcolm said: "It is a huge privilege to share in so many children's lives, and to be known, trusted and loved whenever we are in Bethlehem. The Bible uses the phrase Talitha Kumi - 'Little girl, I say to you, get up'.

"We reach boys and girls when they are down, restore their vision, heal their hurts, comfort them, love them, and pray for and with them. We work in refugee camps, schools, homes and orphanages. It is an enormous privilege, and the work is spreading."

**■ If you would like to find out more about PCDC or offer your help, visit its Facebook page or contact Canon Richard Hill (collis.rick@gmail.com or ring 0191 284 1108). You can also sign up to the charity's monthly e-newsletter by emailing jonathan@pcdcuk.com**

**> PCDC came to the aid of Mahmoud Rabah when he was 11, paying his school fees. The charity then trained Mahmoud to become a nurse, specialising in babies and children. He is now the charity's ambassador**





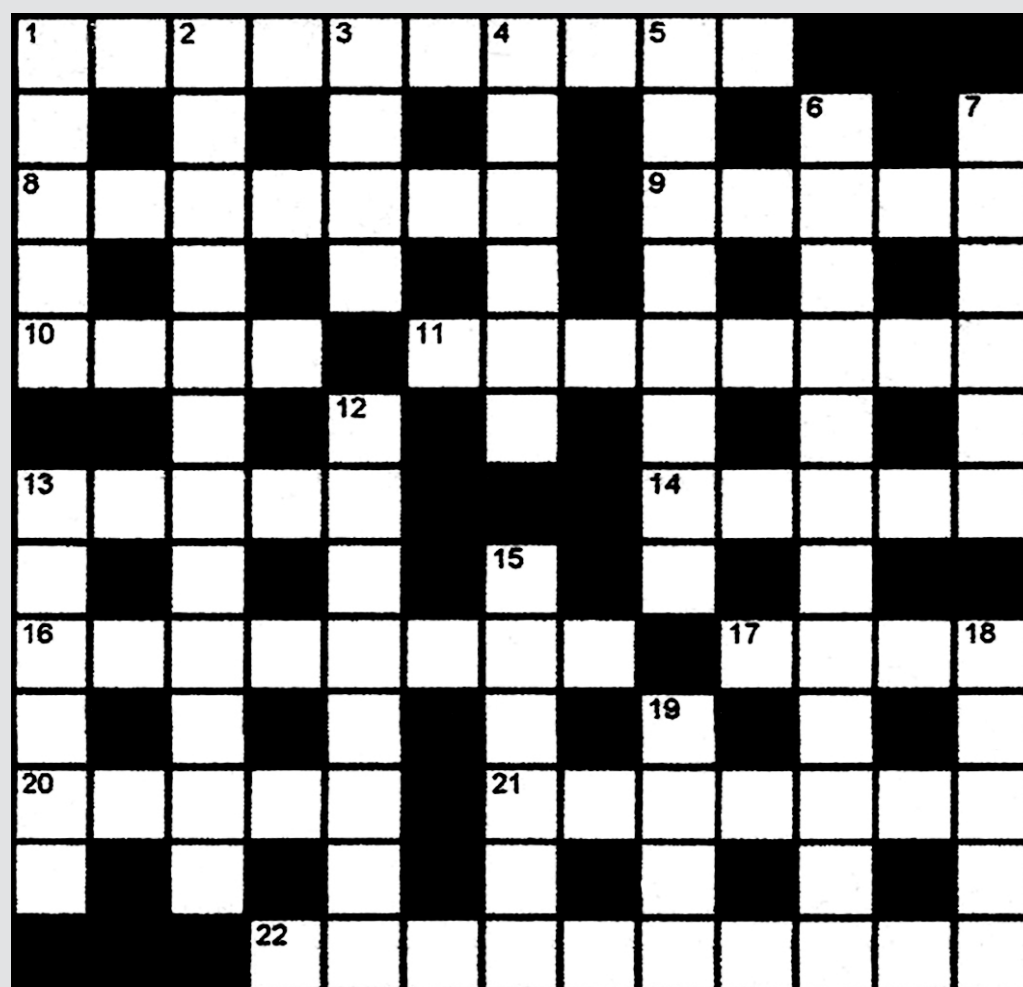
**HAVE YOUR SAY**

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](mailto:communications@newcastle.anglican.org)**

**Link Crossword 180** *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**

1. His chap, Rob, upset senior clergyman (10)
8. Man – one left with European, not Jewish (7)
9. Fellow left our powdery substance (5)
10. Bird, large, seen beside Noah's vessel (4)
11. Massive rift Eric invented (8)
13. Tiny creature said to have strength (5)
14. Run back with directions for healthcare professional (5)
16. Last union leader with lieutenant and one friend (8)
17. Quick to abstain from food (4)
20. Nicked vestment (5)
21. Church member giving graduate part first (7)
23. Regret breaking centre pane (10)

**DOWN**

1. Obliging person getting a new hair product (5)
2. Cheat on about man at one assembly (12)
3. Part about a temptation (4)
4. She originally kept the Spanish money (6)
5. Contribution from European inside, not on call (8)
6. Chapter on company possibly into a religious rite (12)
7. Chapter about Conservative – he uses nursery (6)
12. Headlong rush involving dame's pet, possibly (8)
13. Creamy food for animal, say (6)
15. Firmly fixed stall (6)
18. Bird – he gets tenth part (5)
19. See location (4)

**ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD 179****ACROSS:**

3. Argue 7. Devout  
8. Lent 9. Startled  
10. Oath 1. Salvation Army  
15. Anglo-Catholic 16. Plea  
18. Scarcity 20. Nave  
21. Éclair 22. Rated

**DOWN:**

1. Restrain 2. Poor  
3. Athletic 5. Good  
6. El Dorado 12. Villager  
13. Outdated 14. Maintain  
17. Load 18. Sect 19. Call

**Building a brighter future**

► The full-day visit also included a tour around Bellway's North East headquarters in Woolsington and one of its prestigious new build sites near Ponteland

DUKE'S Secondary School in South East Northumberland has announced an exciting new partnership with UK housebuilding giant, Bellway.

The partnership will see a range of opportunities become available to pupils throughout the school, including employer masterclasses, careers guidance and field visits.

As well as supporting Duke's Secondary School to deliver the National Career Ready programme, it also forms part

of a regional pilot project for Bellway to help introduce young people to the wide variety of career opportunities available in the construction sector, including apprenticeships.

To celebrate the official launch of the project, a cohort of Year 12 students from Duke's Secondary School's Sixth Form took part in a Career Ready Masterclass on 'preparation for work experience'. Students were encouraged to think about what skills they already have, what skills employers might

look for in job candidates and how they can make themselves a model employee.

Danielle Towers, Head of Sixth Form and Careers Lead at Duke's Secondary School (part of NCEA Trust), said: "We are honoured to be working alongside Bellway at the cutting edge of its new school outreach programme.

"At Duke's, and across all of the schools within the wider NCEA Trust, we are committed to providing pupils with high-quality

careers education covering a wide variety of industry sectors to help them make informed decisions about their futures."

Laura Bell, Group HR and OD Manager at Bellway, added: "By showcasing the range of roles available at Bellway and offering opportunities where people can earn while they learn, we hope to open up the possibility of a career in construction to those who may not have previously considered working in the industry."



# St Mary's receives bronze Eco award!

GOING  
FOR  
GREEN



► The Pledge and Prayer tree has seen people write personal commitments to reduce their carbon footprint, and inset right, St Mary's Monkseaton

By Marion Oakes, Parish Environment Champion at St Mary's Monkseaton

**T**AKING care of God's Creation is an integral part of Christian life and environmental issues are an established part of ministry and mission.

At St Mary's we are aiming to reduce our environmental impact and become net zero carbon by 2030. At the end of 2019, we joined the Eco Church programme.

In 2015 we completed a redevelopment programme, which addressed several major issues. Works included a new heating system, LED lighting and water saving toilets, which have since been part of the twinning programme. Wood from removed oak choir stalls was repurposed into a new altar, lectern and various areas of panelling and shutters.

Several groups and individuals continue to work towards our eco goals. We have com-

pleted an eco-survey, implemented an Environmental Policy, completed an energy audit and moved to green energy suppliers. We have started to reduce paper, chemicals and plastic usage and widely encourage the use of Fairtrade and eco-friendly products in church.

In November 2021 we achieved our bronze Eco Church award. As we go forward, we are focusing on some of the eco-survey and the energy audit suggestions. We have a grounds redevelopment project planned which will

incorporate several eco-friendly ideas, and we intend to make the outside space at St Mary's as much of a community asset as the inside.

To encourage individual involvement in all things eco, a 'Pledge and Prayer tree' is available in church. Anyone can write a personal commitment that will help reduce their carbon footprint and can offer much needed prayers, for those affected by the present climate emergency.

## Synod approves rules to help churches meet carbon-reduction target



CHURCHES and parishes across the Diocese will be able to make major improvements to help reach carbon reduction targets.

The Church of England's General Synod has approved new legislation, in an attempt to make eco-friendly changes more efficient.

Changes to the faculty jurisdiction rules – the Church's equivalent of planning law – were voted through, allowing churches to make adaptations easier.

These adaptations include fitting new fossil fuel boilers, electric car charging points and insulating pipes.

The rules come as part of a wide-ranging approach to meet the 2030 net-zero carbon target set by General Synod in February 2020.

In July 2022, the Synod will meet again to discuss a full proposed plan to achieve net zero, which is currently out for consultation.

The Dean of Arches, Morag Ellis GQ said the changes represented a "positive and proportionate" part of the Church's response to the climate emergency, allowing parishes to make informed decisions for their churches.

The Bishop of Norwich, The Right Revd Graham Usher spoke to the Synod as the Church of England's lead Bishop for Environmental Affairs. He said: "The life of the local parish church is the hope for the world. Each is a crucial place for where the living out of our faith happens.

"The new rules offer encouragement to parishes to rise to the challenge of sustainable living, by de-regulating a range of actions, some small, some bigger, all of which can help us move in the right direction."

The rules were approved by an overwhelming majority, and will be laid before Parliament and come into effect on 1 July 2022.

## Net Zero Carbon webinars

THE Church of England's Environment Programme has launched its spring webinar programme.

All the details can be found in its **February newsletter** (to subscribe and receive it monthly, [go here](#)). Subjects include environmental fundraising, eco church, embodied carbon, net zero schools, and an introduction to the Great Big Green Week.

The net zero carbon **webinar page** includes all the past recordings, including church heating, solar panels, EV car charging, LED lighting, conservation pitfalls, navigating the faculty system, and more.



**By Donna Brown, Safeguarding Operation Officer**

AS a Safeguarding team we are constantly striving to offer the support which is needed by the parishes to ensure that everyone in your parish remains safe. A large part of this is ensuring everyone is correctly trained, ensuring everyone has up to date Safeguarding Parish Dashboards and dealing with queries from parishes.

We endeavour to work closely with the parishes, offering a number of sessions for PSOs to attend that can be found [here](#). We meet monthly with Archdeacons to discuss any safeguarding updates or issues in their Archdeaconries, we meet with Area Deans to raise any issues and listen to their issues.

This year, we have also chosen to introduce churchwarden safeguarding meetings. We are aware that there is often a lot of demand on churchwardens and, especially when a church is in interregnum, the level of responsibility is high.

## TOWARDS A SAFER CHURCH

[www.newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding](http://www.newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding)

In October 2017, the House of Bishops published **Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance**. In relation to safeguarding, the churchwardens work with the incumbent, PCC and Parish Safeguarding Officer to:

- Ensure that in the period of a vacancy (during an interregnum), that the incumbent's safeguarding roles and responsibilities are fulfilled, in consultation with the PCC, Parish Safeguarding Officer and the Area Dean.
- Pay attention to the specific needs of children and vulnerable adults when undertaking health and safety inspections and risk assessment.
- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out before new activities are undertaken;
- Ensure that all parish activities with

children and vulnerable adults are adequately supervised and insured.

- Ensure that the parish has procedures for responding to complaints and grievances.
- Answer questions regarding safeguarding as they arise in the Archdeacon's visitations, and respond to any specific safeguarding advice, which may be given from the Archdeacon.

In order to offer as much support as possible, we are holding a number of lunchtime meetings over the next year, some via zoom and some in person in various locations. If you come in person we will even provide you with a light lunch. If you are coming to a zoom call feel free to bring your lunch to the call.

These meetings are for you to bring your issues and ideas to us and will cover the

following questions:

- What is going well that you want to celebrate that others can learn from?
- What are the challenges or obstacles you are facing?
- What support do you need from the diocesan safeguarding team?

They are designed to be an informal chat, but we will note all points raised and let you know what action we will take or are taking. You are welcome to attend one meeting or all of the meetings, depending on the needs of your parish. These meetings will work best if we get a lot of people to come along, so it would be great if you could try and go to at least one.

A full listing of meetings is available [here](#).

If you would like any advice regarding this, or any other Safeguarding queries, please contact myself at [d.brown@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:d.brown@newcastle.anglican.org)

I can also assist with booking these sessions should you need it.

## Northumberland church school welcomes new sensory suite



► Children at William Leech C of E Primary School enjoy the new early years sensory suite

AN investment into state-of-the-art sensory equipment is reaping rewards for children enrolled in the early years provision at William Leech C of E Primary School.

The new early years sensory suite - which can

be used as a safe space to calm down or as a reward - features a blackout tent and blinds, soft play equipment and sensory lighting to help pupils self-regulate and relax.

Staff at the school sought capital for the

project after seeing the success of a sensory 'safe space', being used by older pupils with special education needs and disabilities (SEND).

Part-funded by the school itself, an additional £500 was sourced from

Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust's Endowment Fund to complete the project.

Amy Thompson, Headteacher at William Leech C of E Primary School, said: "The new sensory suite has proved

a huge success so far. We have already seen increased engagement with activities within the suite and in the main classroom following time spent in the sensory room.

"Over time, we hope

to see a decrease in the amount of dysregulated behaviours in school altogether."

For more information about William Leech C of E Primary School, please visit [its website](#).

## Social media training by Digital Labs

THE Church of England's Digital Labs team will be hosting a number of social media themed webinars to aid your church's online presence.

These two webinars aim to improve your video editing skills and inform you of tips and tricks

**digital LABS**

available on your social media platforms, including the 'going live' function.



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

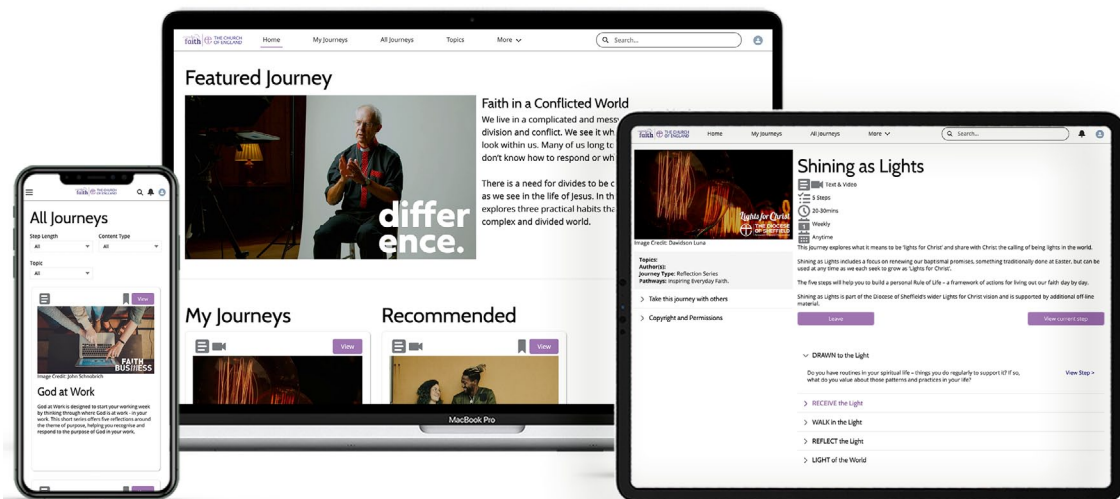
To learn about how to edit videos - guiding you on how to create an engaging video using

Canva and share it on your social channels - [click here](#).

To learn about the 'going live' function - streaming straight to your social media platforms without editing a recorded video - [click here](#).



## Church of England launch 'Everyday Faith portal'



A NEW digital hub has been launched to supply people with bitesize, yet in-depth, journeys to help find and follow God in everyday life.

range of different topics, include reflections, prayers and guidance to encourage your everyday faith.

has multiple resources, including 'Shining as Lights', 'A Contemplative toolkit' and 'Come and See: The Creeds'.

These journeys, based on a

For example, the 'Inspiring Everyday Faith' journey

More information is available [here](#), or [click here](#) to sign-up.



## Thy Kingdom Come 2022

THE prayer resource organisation will be having an online launch event on 28 February, 12pm.

This online webinar will share a range of free resources for churches, families and individuals, designed to spiritually nourish, deepen and refresh one's faith.

More information is available [here](#).

## Noticeboard

**Wednesday 2 March, 10.30am – 3.30pm. Newcastle Cathedral. How Prison Leavers can solve the employment crisis**

Speakers from business, criminal justice, politics and charities will discuss their perspectives on the employment of prison leavers. Speakers include Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Kim McGuinness. Information available [here](#). The Oswin project will also launch their art exhibit, featuring designs from residents in a prison environment, from Tuesday 1 March – Sunday 3 April. This will be visible at Café 16, located inside Newcastle Cathedral. More information [here](#).

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

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

**Monday 7 March, 2.30pm. Parish Centre (NE6 5QN). St Gabriel's Church Julian Meeting**

Offering a time for contemplative and meditative prayer, these meetings fall on the first Monday of the month. Next dates include 4 April and 6 June. More information is available by contacting [stgabriel.heaton@gmail.com](mailto:stgabriel.heaton@gmail.com) or [stephaniestgabriels@gmail.com](mailto:stephaniestgabriels@gmail.com)

**Monday 7 March, 6.30pm – 7.30pm. Learn how to support young people's mental health**

Kintsugi Hope's Youth Wellbeing Group will be hosting an online session to share resources on aiding young people with their mental health. To register your interest please contact Rachel Scheffer at [r.scheffer@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:r.scheffer@newcastle.anglican.org)

**Thursday 10 March, 10am – 11.30am or 6pm – 7.30pm. Finding the Way with Wisdom**

The final session in Holy Rood House's

'wisdom' series, this session will cover 'The Wisdom of Community'. Click [here](#) for more.

**Thursday 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](#).

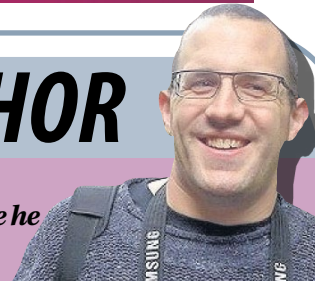
**Saturday 19 March, 10am – 4pm. Holy Rood House. Spring Quiet Garden**

Holy Rood's large garden will provide a quiet, gentle space to hear ideas, poems and prayers. A light lunch and hot drinks will be provided. One space is left for this event. More information is available [here](#).

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

## LIKE A METAPHOR

Tim Hardy, formerly of the Religious Resources Centre, works from the home he shares with Ros, Anwen and Twinkle.



### JIGSAW

LAST week, Anwen decided it was about time we had a go at putting together a jigsaw that she had been given for Christmas. I asked her if she was sure - the relative who chose it must have either only noticed the 'four years plus' in the age description or just thought it was a pretty design and not considered that 500 pieces of variegated colour with no distinct outlines might be a little on the advanced side for a five-and-a-half-year-old - she insisted.

I helped sort out the edge pieces. It was a shared task putting the outer circle together and since then, Anwen has put in about five pieces whilst I've worked on the rest in dribs and drabs as life has allowed. It's taken hours of my time and it's still not finished. But it's coming on, and the end is in sight.

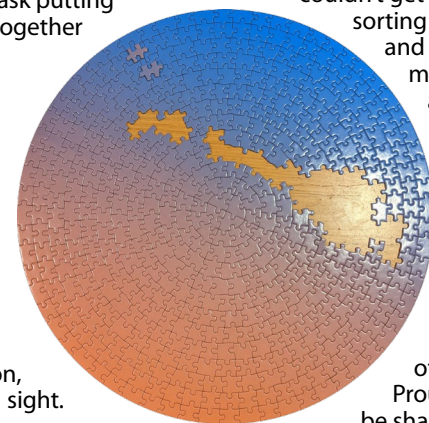
Since I wrote my previous column, despite having been careful and taken reasonable precautions, my entire family went down with Covid. We think it was brought home from school and this seems to be backed up by the fact that Anwen cleared the 'two-tests for freedom' well before the end of her isolation period, whereas Ros and I were still failing as we hit the ten-day mark. Whilst the coughing has gone, I'm still more or less constantly exhausted, and my brain is fogged - whether from the tiredness or after-effects of the virus it's hard to say.

I know I had a mild case but my isolation period meant that I

was unable to be at work for my planned final week at the library and, consequently, I was unable to say a proper goodbye to my colleagues and the four days between finishing my old job and starting an expanded technically-based work-from-home role were spent feeling rotten, rationing the last of our previous food delivery and fighting off cabin fever. The subsequent tiredness brain-fog has meant that I've not really been able to appreciate the extra time the new arrangements have provided.

Putting the edges together was as much as Anwen could manage - she couldn't get her head around sorting out the colours and looking for matching shapes and mini-patterns and at times I'm not sure it's been worth it, but I want to see it finished. It's looking good so far and I hope the cat hasn't eaten any of the final bits. Proud photos will be shared far and wide when it's complete.

Beginning a life of faith, it might be all we can manage to get a vague idea of the shape of things. As we grow we'll struggle with missing pieces of varying significance and pieces we can't fit in for the life of us, getting obsessively distracted instead of leaving them for later. We'll also find patterns, fitting the pieces together and maybe sooner than we'd expect we'll see the overall picture forming. And, no matter how much puzzling we have ahead of us, it's always worth listening for the voice of our father whispering: "Maybe try putting that one over there".



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](#).

**Wednesday 13 – Tuesday 19 April. Holy Rood House. Holy Week and Easter Retreat.**

Join Holy Rood House for their Easter theme: 'Making Meaning of the Story through Creative Arts', led by Revd Elizabeth Baxter and the Holy Rood community. Includes reflections and celebrations, music and poetry and much more. Information is available [here](#).

**Friday 20 – Sunday 22 May. Holy Rood House. Men's Spirituality Weekend.**

Join David Gee and Urs Mattmann for their session 'The Green Man: discovering holistic greening spirituality'. You can learn more [here](#).



# Every gift. Every action. Every prayer. Every one of us can change lives.

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

**O**UR planet is changing, but some people are feeling the effects of these changes more than others. Weather extremes are now more frequent and more intense, and the world is facing a climate crisis.

For the first time in a generation, global poverty is rising. Coronavirus, conflict and the climate crisis are pushing more of our global neighbours into a struggle for survival.

In rural Zimbabwe, seven out of ten women rely on farming to earn a living and provide for their families. But the climate crisis has brought intense droughts that have left their land barren.

In times of drought, many families can only afford to eat one bowl of porridge a day.

"One year, we had no rain. The scorching sun burnt my crops just as they were about to bloom. It was so painful and disheartening," said Jessica, one of the many women at the mercy of the climate crisis.

"My children crave a good meal, but I can't provide. We often go to bed on an empty stomach. It pains me to send them to bed hungry."

Another woman who has faced the worst of the climate crisis is Janet, a grandmother from Zimbabwe.

"One year, there was so little food. Rains had not fallen. We ate things which we wouldn't eat in normal times. I made porridge and gave it to the children, then removed a portion and put it down



► Jessica Mwedzi, is hungry to provide food – and hope – for her family.

for the dogs. The children picked up the dogs' share because they weren't full. When I saw this, I knew the situation had become unbearable," Janet shared.

With faith, hope and love for her family, Janet brought her family through this painful time with the support of Christian Aid's BRAC programme (Building Resilience through Absorptive and Adaptive Capacities for Transformation). This programme helps the most at-risk communities in Zimbabwe to prepare for and adapt to the changing climate, including teaching farmers how to grow drought-

resistant crops.

Now, her farm is bursting with life, and she harvests enough surplus food to share with her neighbours while also storing enough to survive future droughts.

So far, we've helped over 27,000 people in Zimbabwe to stand strong and resilient to the climate crisis. But there is still more to do.

This Christian Aid Week, you can be one of the hundreds of thousands of our supporters who give, act and pray – stepping out in love for our global neighbours.

From envelope collections to walking 300,000 steps in May, Christian Aid Week brings people together as one community helping those living in poverty to transform their own lives.

This Christian Aid Week (15-21 May), please:

- Give generously to help women grow crops that survive in the drought.
- Act and raise your voice for justice. Join our Loss and Damage campaign.
- Pray that families will stay strong during tough times of drought.

Find out more about **Christian Aid week here**.



► Janet Zirugo waters fine beans in her garden of plenty.

## Become a Local Church Champion

FOR 100 years BRF has been supporting and resourcing the local church. It has grown significantly over the years and is now home to a range of vibrant ministries such as Messy Church and Parenting for Faith.

Local Church Champions share the work of BRF and its ministries in their local church. This could be through church notice sheets and social media, giving out flyers and leaflets, or talking about

BRF's various ministries to individuals or groups.



BRF offers a friendly welcome, ongoing support from the team leader, all the resources you need and a genuine appreciation of your contribution to our mission.

To learn more or volunteer for the role, please contact Church

Advocacy Lead Jane Butcher at [jane.butcher@brf.org.uk](mailto:jane.butcher@brf.org.uk).

## Primary pupils embark on training course to become Mini Medics



► Pupils at Thomas Bewick C of E Primary School participating in the Mini Medics course

PUPILS at a church school in Ashington have taken part in a cutting-edge training course to become 'Mini Medics'.

Students from St Thomas Bewick C of E Primary School thoroughly enjoyed the half-day course, where they learned basic first aid skills, including how to assess a person's medical needs and how to raise the alarm in case of an emergency.

They also learned practical first aid, tending to cuts, grazes and sprains, as well as more advanced emergency care techniques.

Jess Williamson, Headteacher at Thomas Bewick C of E Primary School, said: "We are incredibly proud of all of the children who took part in the Mini

Medics course. The sense of pride they had in themselves following the session was fantastic to see."

Year 6 pupil Aston Jo said: "We had to try and clear the airway of the dummy we were using by hitting it on the back. We were then shown the Heimlich Manoeuvre and the object came out of his mouth."

Tony Mordue, First Aid Trainer at Simonside Outdoor Adventure, added: "It was a pleasure to work with the staff and pupils at Thomas Bewick C of E Primary School on the Mini Medics course."

To find out more about the school, [click here](#) or for more information about Mini Medics, visit its [website](#).



### 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](http://www.bit.ly/ebulletin-resub) or via our Facebook page [@nddiocese](https://www.facebook.com/nddiocese)