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'Touched beyond words'

Bishop receives Freedom of the City

BISHOP Christine has spoken of the 'wonderful honour' of being awarded Freedom of the City just weeks after announcing her retirement.

It has been an emotional and nostalgic period for Bishop Christine who, after six years as Bishop of Newcastle, will step down from her role at the end of November.

Describing the time she has spent in our Diocese as a 'privilege', she said: "I am profoundly grateful for the six years I have served this Diocese, the depth of welcome and relationships in this region has been inspirational and encouraging. We have all been called to minister together, lay and ordained, at a time of extraordinary challenge, and I am very proud of the way in which our clergy and laity have responded to this. I give thanks for all of you. It has been a privilege to be your Bishop.

"My husband Roger and I have been incredibly blessed by the generosity and support that has been shown to both of us in our time in Newcastle Diocese. Its people, history, and landscape have an enduring place in our hearts, and we will always treasure the years we have spent here."

Bishop Christine, the 12th Bishop of Newcastle, has played an instrumental role in developing and diversifying mission and ministry within our Diocese and she has worked tirelessly to shine a spotlight on underrepresented groups in the North East.

Through her work as Chair of the North of Tyne Combined Authority Inclusive Economy Board, her seat in the House of Lords, and her various patronages including Street Zero, Bishop Christine has advocated for change on many levels and has dedicated much of her time to campaign against the socioeconomic disparity between our region and others.

After a challenging 18 months brought about by the Covid pandemic, the 'spiritual guidance and comfort' offered by Bishop Christine, which has helped people to navigate a difficult and anxious period in their lives, has



► Bishop Christine has received Freedom of the City status in Newcastle

been honoured by Newcastle City Council.

She has been granted Freedom of the City status, an honorary title decreed on individuals or groups who have made important contributions to Newcastle and is the highest honour that the city council can bestow.

Council leader Nick Forbes nominated Bishop Christine for the honour in recognition of the 'enormous impact on the life of the city and its residents', with the proposal being seconded by opposition leader Nick Cott.

The nomination stated: "In the most difficult and challenging times, Bishop Christine has provided spiritual guidance and comfort to many. She has delivered real improvements that have made people's lives better and is a voice for those often left unheard and a figure of true inspiration."

During a special meeting where councillors accepted the nomination,

Councillor Forbes commented on Bishop Christine's outstanding presence within a number of different Newcastle communities, speaking out on issues such as LGBTQ+ rights and poverty.

Councillor Cott similarly commended Bishop Christine's advocacy for social justice, and her efforts in aiding the less fortunate.

In response to her nomination, Bishop Christine, who is the first faith leader to be honoured in this way by Newcastle City Council, said: "Our city has a proud history, and is a wonderfully vibrant and exciting place, to live, work, study and play. When I came here to be Bishop of Newcastle, the depth of welcome was extraordinary and the relationships I have formed have been inspirational and encouraging.

"Newcastle is a city I have been privileged to serve and call home for the last six years. During this time, I have

worked alongside some incredible people dedicated to improving the lives of so many, particularly the most vulnerable in our society. We have worked hard to highlight issues such as poverty in our communities, particularly among our children and young people, and the need for the Government to be investing more in the North.

"To be nominated for the Freedom of the City is a wonderful honour and I am touched by this at a level that is beyond words."

Bishop Christine is due to retire on 30 November.

Bishop Mark will lead the Diocese of Newcastle as the process begins to appoint the next Bishop of Newcastle.

He said: "Bishop Christine has been a profound voice of hope and faith for the Church and the North East, locally and nationally, as a passionate advocate of our region. It's been a privilege

to serve in the team she has developed, in the midst of so many changes and challenges, to help us be a growing church bringing hope for our Diocese. We have appreciated her compassionate, straight-talking, faith-filled and collaborative leadership which never shies away from the issues at hand. "Although we will miss Bishop Christine deeply in the Diocese, we will be bolstered by the hope and faith in Jesus Christ which she constantly holds before us. Our prayers and love will go with her and Roger."

Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, added: "Christine Hardman has been an outstanding Bishop of Newcastle, bringing hope and purpose to the parishes and communities she serves and becoming a trusted and respected voice for the Christian faith in the North East, but also in our national life through her work and witness in the House of Lords. As she approaches retirement I wish her and Roger every blessing. We thank God for her tenacious faithfulness."

Bishops' Diaries

October

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

Bishop of Newcastle

- 8th Meeting of North East MPs and Peers
North East Chamber of Commerce Lunch
with Archbishop of York
Reception, Newcastle Civic Centre
- 11th Meeting of Bishops and Archdeacons
- 13th Meeting of Bishop's Staff Team
- 14th Meeting of North East Regional Bishops
- 17th 133rd Anniversary Service, St George Jesmond
Newcastle Resource Church
- 18th Newcastle Diocesan Sons of the Clergy AGM
- 19th Meeting at House of Bishops
- 21st Council of Faiths Open Meeting
- 24th Sunday Eucharist, Felton and Longframlington
Dedication Service, Shotley St John
- 25th Interviews, Breamish and Till Benefice
- 26th Interviews, North Tyne and Redesdale
- 31st 150th Anniversary, Stannington St Mary
Mission and Ministry Partnership,
Embleton/Aln and Coastal Parishes

Bishop of Berwick

- 3rd Visit to Kirkharle St Wilfred for Sunday Eucharist
St Cuthbert's Bellingham to bless the new steps to
St Cuthbert's Well
Evening Confirmation Service, Wall
- 4th Meeting of Next Steps Core Team
- 5th Meeting with Diocesan Director of Education, Longbenton
Meeting with Director of Mission and Ministry
- 6th Meeting of Next Steps Core Team
Meeting with Archdeacon of Northumberland
Meeting with Director of Initial Ministerial Education
- 7th Virtual meeting with bishops from around the world
Meeting of Next Steps Core Team
Service to commemorate start of the legal year,
Newcastle Cathedral
- 10th Sunday Eucharist, Longframlington St Mary's
Celebration of Ministry Service, Newcastle Cathedral
- 11th Meeting of Next Steps Core Team
- 12th Meeting with Diocesan Director of Ordinands
Meeting with Director of Mission and Ministry
- 13th Meeting of Bishop's Staff Team
- 17th 150th Anniversary Service, St Cuthbert's Amble
- 18th Visit to St Mary's CofE and Holy Trinity CofE,
Berwick upon Tweed
- 19th Meeting of Next Steps Core Team
Service, St John's College, Durham
- 20th Meeting of Next Steps Core Team
Meeting of Area Deans and Bishop's Staff
Together Newcastle Trustees Meeting
- 21st Newcastle Holy Cross Licensing

Bishop's annual garden parties make welcome return



> (Left to right) The Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Bishop Christine, the Civic Head of Northumberland County Council, the Lord Mayor's Consort and Susan Hughes wife of the former Vicar of Berwick, now Sheriff's Lady

BISHOP Christine gave a warm welcome to people from across the Diocese at her annual summer garden parties.

Last year's events were unfortunately cancelled due to Covid restrictions, however the popular gatherings made a welcome return in 2021.

Bishop Christine, with her husband Roger, hosted three garden parties, from 6 to 8 September, at Bishop's House in Gosforth, attended by almost 200

guests.

Attendees included serving clergy, Area Deans and Lay Chairs, civic leaders, chairs of diocesan boards and committees, Honorary and Lay Canons, General Synod representatives, two of the three recipients of the Royal Maundy Money, Honorary Assistant Bishops and Retired Clergy Deanery Stewards.

Due to Bishop Christine's upcoming retirement in November, these will be the last garden parties she hosts as Bishop of Newcastle.

Comings & Goings

Appointments

Revd Daniel McCarthy, previously Team Rector of Aldenham and Shenley, Diocese of St Albans is going to be Interim Minister, Newcastle Holy Cross

Revd Elizabeth Brown, Hon Associate Priest in the Morpeth Benefice and part-time Chaplain, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation has been appointed full-time Chaplain within the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Revd Hannah Cleugh, Senior Chaplain to the Bishop of Ely, Diocese of Ely is going to be Vicar of Monkseaton St Peter

Revd Sarah Lunn, Priest in Charge of Chollerton with Birtley and Thockrington and St Oswald and Lee with Bingfield is also going to be Priest in Charge of Humshaugh, Simonburn and Wark

Revd Alison Hardy, Priest in Charge of Embleton with Rennington and Rock is also going to be

Priest in Charge of Longhoughton (including Boulmer) with Howick and Lesbury and Alnmouth

Revd Wiliemhina Munns, Priest in Charge of Cresswell and Lynemouth is going to be Vicar of Derby St Alkmund and St Werburgh in the Diocese of Derby

Revd Waldemar Nion, Assistant Curate at Cowgate and Newbiggin Hall is going to be half-time Priest in Charge of Chapel House, Holy Nativity

Retirements

Revd Alyson Lamb, Priest in Charge at Mitford and Hebron will retire on 3 October

Resignations

Revd Jane Natrass, Vicar of Gosforth, St Nicholas has resigned with effect from 31 October

Gospel Readings

October

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1st Luke 10.13-16 | 17th Mark 10.35-45 |
| 2nd Luke 10.17-24 | 18th Luke 10.1-9 |
| 3rd Mark 10.2-16 | 19th Luke 12.35-38 |
| 4th Luke 10.25-37 | 20th Luke 12.39-48 |
| 5th Luke 10.38-end | 21st Luke 12.49-53 |
| 6th Luke 11.1-4 | 22nd Luke 12.54-end |
| 7th Luke 11.5-13 | 23rd Luke 13.1-9 |
| 8th Luke 11.15-26 | 24th Mark 10.46-end |
| 9th Luke 11.27-28 | 25th Luke 13.10-17 |
| 10th Mark 10.17-31 | 26th Luke 13.18-21 |
| 11th Luke 11.29-32 | 27th Luke 13.22-30 |
| 12th Luke 11.37-41 | 28th John 15.17-end |
| 13th Luke 42-46 | 29th Luke 14.1-6 |
| 14th Luke 47-end | 30th Luke 14.1, 7-11 |
| 15th Luke 12.1-7 | 31st Mark 12.28-34 |
| 16th Luke 12.8-12 | |

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Church opens 'lifeline' Baby Bank

A VITAL service offering support to new parents who are struggling to afford essentials for their babies has been launched by a North Tyneside church.

The North Shields Baby Bank, based at St John's Percy Main, has already helped several families access much-needed provisions including nappies, wipes, clothing and baby formula.

Launched in the summer, the Baby Bank – the first of its kind in North Tyneside – is the result of a partnership between the church and Karbon Homes.

Revd Lee Cleminson, Vicar at St John's Church, said: "We've all heard of food banks and know what a valuable lifeline they are for people struggling. However, as a result of parents discreetly contacting the vicarage, asking for help, there was a clear need for a similar scheme which supplied basic baby items.

"One mother who came to the church for help explained that she was having to choose between charging her electric meter and buying nappies for her beautiful newborn baby boy. She was desperate and said she never, ever thought she'd see herself in this position.

"It was a conversation with Melanie Rees from Karbon Homes, our Community Connector for the area, which really got the ball rolling. Despite having to postpone the initial launch of the service because of the pandemic, we've spent time developing connections with local organisations in the area, such as The Cedarwood Trust in Meadow Well and Family Gateway in Wallsend, which are both referring parents and helping us to reach as many families as we can."

The project secured £4,935 of funding from Karbon's Community Grants Fund, which has covered the set up and initial running costs.



► From left to right, Mary Ormston, Community Connector from Karbon Homes, with North Shields Baby Bank volunteers Kathryn McAndrew, Joan Abela, Brenda Oates and Revd Lee Cleminson

Melanie added: "It's been fantastic to work with Reverend Lee and the team of volunteers at St John's Church to bring forward the idea for the baby bank and get the project off the ground.

"The need for services like this is greater than ever before due to the impact the pandemic has had on people's finances. The service is a fantastic support mechanism, ensuring every child has the essential items they need to thrive, and really means the world to those who benefit from it."

Thanks to kind donations from the community and support from Karbon Homes, the baby bank has been able to provide a number of baby bundles containing a Moses basket, nappies, wipes, bedding, clothing, baby baths and other baby essentials.

One Baby Bank user, who has praised the

lifeline service, said: "I was caught out when my baby girl arrived early and as I was discharged from hospital, a local community worker contacted the Baby Bank at St John's on my behalf as I had nothing.

"The volunteers provided me with the most beautiful baby bundle. I was so overwhelmed with what had been done, not only for me but for my innocent baby girl. If it wasn't for the help of the Baby Bank, I don't know what I would have done or where I would have turned."

For information regarding the service, either [email stjohnpercymain@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:stjohnpercymain@tiscali.co.uk) or contact through the [Baby Bank's Facebook page](#).

Donations of baby items, such as baskets, clothes or any other essentials will also be gratefully received.



With Bishop Mark Wroe

'LOOK UP!'

RECENTLY in a sermon, I shared the story of teaching my youngest daughter to ride a bike some time ago when she was about four years old.

She was particularly anxious about the pedals and keeping her feet from slipping off them. As I pushed her along she kept looking down focussed on what her feet were doing.

When the moment came for me to let go, she set off but still watching her feet. So, I shouted to her, 'Look up!'

At which point she stopped staring at her feet and looked straight up into the sky!

Fortunately, the road was clear and my daughter was fine. But it strikes me that God is saying to me and may be to many of us, 'Look up!'

There are many things we are still anxious about, particularly the way ahead of us and what the future might hold. So, we concentrate on keeping our feet on the pedals with our heads down because things feel a little wobbly and unstable.

And yet in our worry and uncertainty, our Scriptures, our prayers, our gathering at the Lord's Table, always beckon us to look up. Psalm 121: 'I lift up my eyes to the hills – from where will my help come?' Our Eucharistic Prayer invites us 'Lift up your hearts!' And in his Letter to the Colossians, Paul encourages us: 'Set your minds on things that are above.'

In these days, post-lockdown and post-Brexit, with much still uncertain, I wonder if God is saying to us, 'Look up!'

It can feel like our world has shrunk so much, and our horizons of hope have lowered. We are anxious about our health, our way of life, the future and growth of our children and communities. In the midst of all this, God beckons us once again to 'fix our eyes on Jesus' (Hebrews 12.2) or to 'Look up!'

We have come through so much change in the last 18 months, and there will be more to come, not least as we say a fond and grateful farewell to Bishop Christine next month. Yet in all of it, our God is constant and faithful. Perhaps our eyes may fail and our gaze drop, but God's eyes remain fixed on us, his heart is set on us.

There are many things and places in which we may be tempted to place our hopes, or we hope will lift our spirits. Some say the opening question of Psalm 121 is about lifting our eyes beyond merely the hills, where Israel had a range of shrines to other gods as options for their attention, to truly look to the One who will be our help: 'the Lord, who made heaven and earth.'

Sometimes we need to concentrate on the pedals, and we need to look ahead. But as God's people, our gaze is redirected upwards: our hearts and our minds raised to the Lord of heaven and earth. Let's help each other to 'Look up!'

Lay ministry celebration

A CELEBRATORY service honouring lay ministry in our Diocese will take place in October.

The aim of the service is to affirm, commission, pray for and send out all lay ministers including Authorised Lay Ministers, Anna Chaplains, Pioneers, Readers, Children and Youth Workers, Church Wardens, and anyone else who

recognises their call to discipleship, both inside and outside church buildings and in their everyday lives.

The service, led by Bishop Mark and Nic Denyer, the Diocese's Lay Ministry Development Officer, will be joyful, truly collaborative and informal, with lay people across the Diocese telling their stories, reading Scripture and leading prayers – no

robing is required.

There will be refreshments after the service, as well as a chance to connect with each other.

The service will take place at Newcastle Cathedral on Sunday 10 October at 6.30pm and will also be live streamed via the cathedral's [Youtube channel](#).

PHOTO BY: GWYNNETH GUTHRIE



BISHOP Mark led a service and preached at Berwick Parish Church on Sunday 15 August, the Feast of The Blessed Virgin Mary.

He took as his theme The Magnificat, The Song of Mary, encouraging folk to follow her example of rejoicing in her faith in God, praying and caring for others.

Pictured left to right are Canon Alan and Susan Hughes, Sheriff and Sheriff's Lady. Then follows Bishop Mark, stood next to Sergeant-at-Arms, Joyce Benton and the Vicar of Berwick, Canon Dennis Handley. On the far right are Mayoress Jo Bowlas and County Councillor Catherine Seymour, with the Mayor of Berwick, Councillor Alan Bowlas seated centre.



**NEWCASTLE
CATHEDRAL**

*View
from the
Lantern*

*With Kate Sussams, Director of Operations
at Newcastle Cathedral*

WELCOME BACK TO NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL!

WE are open! My goodness, how amazing it is to be able to welcome people back into our wonderful cathedral, which seems transformed yet enduringly the same.

If you have been following our progress via our regular social media posts, Dean Geoff's blogs or our newsletter, you will have seen just how much work has been undertaken in the last 18 months. And what a feat, from the builders battling with social distancing or supply issues and staff adjusting to the lockdowns of 2020 with new homeworking regimes, to the clergy becoming live streaming gurus and holding the worshipping life of the cathedral together.

Finally, in the spring, we saw light at the end of the tunnel and could actually start thinking about our re-opening, with all the planning needed for activities, volunteers, marketing and how it was all going to actually work. We were so pleased to be able to open on 12 August and, gosh, what a wonderful day it was.

The very first person to cross the threshold was a long-standing member of our congregation who just stood very still by the font and took it all in, confessing to me that they were there to 'say hello to a long-lost friend who you've not seen for a while but they're still there and just as lovely'. I left them to just take it all in and to be still and quiet and absorb.

However, that wasn't for long as pretty soon the building was bustling with so many people, including lots of children and parents. They were wowed by the activities which our Learning Team had laid out, especially the activities station where there were boxes of things for children to pick up and explore/create/build. The first few weeks were awash with smiling

faces and interested people.

Our wonderful volunteers were thrown in at the deep end with new things to learn and lots of ways to engage with all our visitors, whether those coming for a look at our ledger stones or those seeking solace and shelter.

One young volunteer, 17-year-old Andrew Cooke, writes: "The cathedral has a policy of 'radical welcome' meaning that no matter who walks through their doors they are welcomed as anyone else would be and that they are just as deserving to have their needs met by this cathedral as anyone else is.

"As a volunteer here, I will confess that this isn't always an easy exercise. Trying desperately hard not to make judgements about people and treat everyone with the same love and kindness goes against our instincts and can make us feel a bit uncomfortable, anxious and sometimes even scared. However, despite all of these difficulties, it is a challenge that is no less worthwhile and rewarding and one that we should not shy away from."

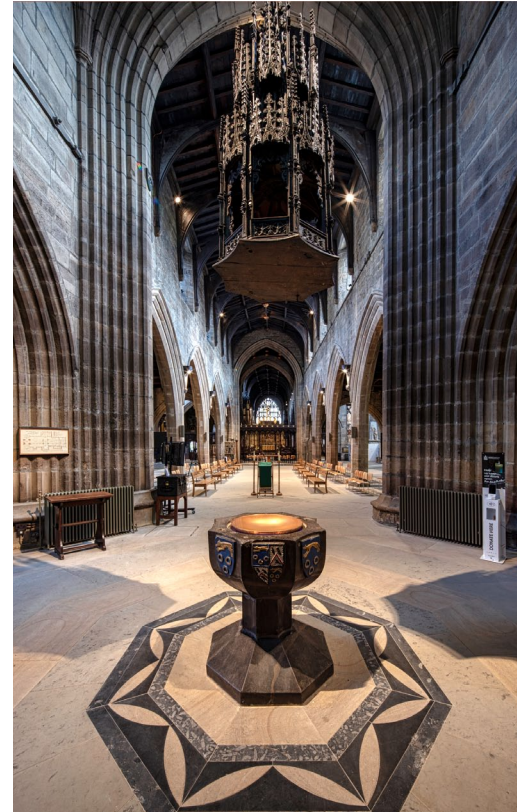
We have had some wonderful feedback from visitors on our social media pages, such as: "The cathedral provides a great welcome to families and sends out the message that kids are welcome in such places" and "The space is inspirational and weaves together old and new in a way which makes Christianity relevant in the 21st century. Today we encountered God in a new way. Thank you for this."

Of course, the 'hard work' now begins! How to ensure that everything we do is high quality and meaningful and embraces all our visitors' needs is top of our minds. Juggling the sometimes conflicting needs of visitors, worship and hosting large events is a pleasant challenge and one which gives us cause for daily reflection as a team. However, we are thrilled to finally be able to say... Welcome!

Cathedral unveils historic transformation



> New features include interpretation panels, lively animation and a new sound and light show.



> The newly conserved 15th century baptismal font.
PICTURES: GRAEME PEACOCK

NEWCASTLE Cathedral is once again open to all visitors following a stunning multi-million pound transformation.

An online service of thanksgiving and rededication took place at the end of July where Bishop Christine blessed a beautiful stone floor plaque, newly carved to mark the refurbishment.

And on Thursday 12 August, the doors of Newcastle Cathedral were officially re-opened to a flurry of excited visitors.

The 20-month-long redevelopment project, known as 'Common Ground in Sacred Space', has been undertaken to re-establish the cathedral as a dynamic community hub and a key attraction in Newcastle's city centre with significant improvements to the public space outside and an overhaul of its interior to accommodate more visitors, events and activities.

The Very Revd Geoff Miller, Dean of Newcastle, said: "Common Ground in Sacred Space was launched as the cathedral's vision over ten years ago and has involved the largest refurbishment since the works that took place here in 1882, when St Nicholas' became a cathedral."

The historic and spiritual landmark has been sympathetically restored and re-modelled into an accessible visitor attraction, whilst at the same time preserving and celebrating its ancient religious roots.

In the Nave, new underfloor heating and flexible seating accommodates new styles of worship and now enables

the cathedral to host large-scale business and cultural events seeking a grand, period-style and highly memorable experience.

New features include fascinating interpretation panels, lively animation and a new sound and light show, which are designed to bring 900 years of history to life, chronicling the development of the cathedral as the ancient heart of a modern city.

Interactive digital displays tell the stories of some of Newcastle's most significant characters commemorated in the Cathedral's ledger stones. These historic grave covers have been protected and conserved as part of the redevelopments.

Historic architectural features have been newly conserved and brought to life, including the 15th century baptismal font and the cathedral's oldest resident - a 14th century effigy of a medieval knight, thought to be Peter le Marechal, sword bearer to King Edward I.

Outside, the cathedral's new churchyard trail and beautifully landscaped terrace provides a sanctuary to unwind and learn more about the cathedral in the context of the city's historic quarter. Visitors can relax in the refurbished green space and follow the paved ribbon of 'Newcastle Beatitudes' (or Blessings), where beautifully inscribed roundels punctuate the pavement, inviting visitors to pause and reflect.

Alongside the cathedral's regular pattern of daily Christian worship and choral music, visitors can also look forward to an exciting programme of events and activities inspired by the

city and the cathedral's past and present.

Regular history and architectural tours will take place, and themed craft activities for all the family include 'Archaeology and Discovery', where visitors can explore some of the scientific discoveries and feats of engineering that are referenced in the cathedral building; 'Creativity and Wellbeing' activities that place mental wellbeing front and centre; and 'Party and Play', which acknowledges the hard work and commitment of communities this past year.

There will also be the long-anticipated return of 'Lantern Tower Tours' to gain breath-taking views of the city and a 'Virtual Lantern Tower Tour' has been developed for visitors that are unable, or not quite confident enough, to make the climb.

Dean Geoff added: "At its heart, the project has been about creating a sustainable future for our magnificent cathedral, celebrating its elegance, but also energising its mission to make this sacred place common ground. We are buzzing and bursting with excitement to welcome visitors of all faiths and none into our story."

The 'Common Ground in Sacred Space' project has been made possible thanks to money raised by National Lottery players through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and the generosity of many charitable trusts, foundations and individuals.

For daily opening times, worship and music services, and events and activities for all the family, visit [Newcastle Cathedral's website](#).

Cathedral vacancies

NEWCASTLE Cathedral is recruiting for a Technical Verger and Marketing Intern to join its team.

The cathedral is looking for a skilled Technical Verger to support live-streaming and to be the key person within the verger team to oversee all audio-visual systems.

The Marketing Intern role will provide support in all aspects of the delivery of marketing and communications, aimed

at engaging a broad range of target audiences including tourists, families, schools, pilgrims, and new volunteers.

This role is open to current undergraduate and postgraduate students and to people who have graduated within the last two years.

The closing date for applications is 30 September for the Marketing Intern role and 5 October for the Technical Verger position.

For more information on the roles and how to apply, [click here.](#)

Oswin Project opens Café 16 at cathedral: Page 7 >>>

Students get creative with pandemic exhibition

By Tom Moorcroft

STUDENTS at a Northumberland church school have created a series of multimedia exhibitions demonstrating the significant impact of Covid on our North East communities.

These exhibitions, which will be hosted at Newcastle Cathedral in early October, aim to combine elements of the STEM curriculum (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) with Art, Design, Media and Languages.

Duke's Secondary School in Ashington, which is part of the Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust, aimed to tell the story of the pandemic through a number of art installations. Each installation was a different stage of the Coronavirus pandemic, outlining how the North East tackled Covid and what it's been like for people in our communities to 'live through history'.

The exhibition was named 'Pan@NCEA', merging the words 'pandemic' and the acronym for Northumberland church of England Academy Trust.

The installations try to tackle all the senses, with sounds recordings of students and contacts from around the world, as well as interviews with Duke's Secondary School's Principal, Mr Russ Atkinson and Father Laurence Freeman, Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation.

They also had interactive activities, such as real-life X-Rays to compare healthy lungs with lungs affected by Covid, an experiment to show how the lateral flow test works, and a model of Covid-19 DNA, made by a blind student who has since graduated.

The exhibition will culminate with a special final display at Newcastle Cathedral from 30 September to 7 October.

Dr Jodi Harrison, Academic Mentor at Duke's Secondary School, who led the project for the students, said: "We're so excited to take our Pan@NCEA project on tour through the



► It was a 'hands-on' day for the children!

summer. Coronavirus has been the single biggest challenge that many of our young people have ever had to face.

"While many people simply want to put the pandemic behind them, we felt it was important to really explore the impact of Covid-19 on a scientific, economic and historic level to fully appreciate the gravitas of what we've lived through.

"The students threw themselves into the challenge and worked incred-

ibly hard to create something which is truly reflective of not just their own experience of Coronavirus, but of the experience of our communities as a collective."

Dr Neil D. Graham, Vice Chair of the Royal Society of Chemistry Local Section, added: "[We're] always happy to support efforts made by students and teachers to advance their understanding and knowledge in chemistry and it's real-world applications. This is especially true when efforts are made to share this knowledge with others."



► Academic staff at the church school posing with one of their student's displays

RECENTLY I was reflecting on Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, specifically where he writes about the Corinthians' plans the previous year to participate in a collection for churches in Judea.

Despite their earlier intentions, the believers in Corinth seem to have become side-tracked.

Paul reminds them of the need to carry through on their commitments and explains that it is God's will that by mutually supplying one another, there should be some sort of equality. He also reminds them that what they start they should finish. It's a message as straightforward and relevant today as it was then.

Good intentions often start with great momentum. As the pandemic took hold last year, nearly a million people volunteered to help the NHS and their local support centres, foodbanks saw large spikes in donations to cope with surging demand, and the Charities Aid Foundation reported a huge peak in charitable donations during the initial months of lockdown.

More recently we have witnessed a staggering outpouring of generosity in our communities as efforts have been co-ordinated to donate supplies to welcome refugees from Afghanistan to our region.

But what happens when everyday life takes over again, as it did in Corinth, yet the need for support continues? Evidence from food banks for instance shows that whilst food poverty continues to afflict vulnerable families, the initial public generosity during the Covid-19 crisis was exceptional, not the 'new normal'.

Dramatic mass responses like these give us a glimpse of what our world could look like if generosity was a way of life, weaved into every single day not just 'special occasions'. What a different place the world could be! Imagine a society that looks out for one another at all times, a society that aims to level the playing fields when providence gives more of the good things in life to some, and less to others.

But generosity is complex and not always easy. Paul recognises this too and

New appointment for Generous Giving

WE are delighted to announce the appointment of Leanne Conway-Wilcox as Generous Giving Adviser.

Working alongside Generous Giving Team Leader Joanne Christie, Leanne will take a lead in encouraging, enabling and supporting parishes to live and give generously.

Leanne is a Churchwarden and newly Authorised Lay Minister at Church of the Ascension, Kenton as well as being a volunteer Group Scout Leader.

With a background in running her own business, Leanne brings a wealth of skills including, working with external partners and volunteers, managing finances and project fundraising.

Generosity for Life

By Joanne Christie,
Generous Giving
Adviser

@JoanneCTweets



assures the Christians in Corinth that no one is accountable for what they don't have, they need only be concerned with what they do, and tailor their efforts accordingly.

Like many disciplines, generosity can and should be nurtured. When we begin to view generosity as a form of 'looking after what we've been given' and acknowledge that everything we have is actually God's, our perspectives can change dramatically. With a bit of focus and attention we can begin to form new habits, be it a regular contribution to the local foodbank, taking time out of a busy life to make a weekly call to someone who lives alone, or committing to regular financial giving to an organisation that seeks to help others.

As we enter into Newcastle Diocese Generosity Week on Sunday 26 September, why not take up the opportunity to kick start a lifestyle of generosity with the **Generosity Week Challenge?**

The challenge, which takes place over eight consecutive days, consists of a short daily podcast followed by a reflection and a practical activity to help activate generosity in our daily lives. I'll be taking part, because just like the Corinthians there's room in my life for more consistency, and as Paul points out other people are counting on it.

■ More information and resources can be found on the **Newcastle Diocese Generosity Week webpages.**

Leanne said: "I'm excited to join the Generous Giving team, it will be a wonderful opportunity to meet people and support them in exploring Generous Giving at their parish. It is a fantastic opportunity to show the impact even small actions can take, and how with the right support we can enable the church's ministry and mission to be more Christ like."

Rob Saner-Haigh, Director of Mission and Ministry, added: "We're so pleased to welcome Leanne to the team in succession to Andrew Tinkler. Alongside her own business experience and working with volunteers, Leanne knows all about the joys and pressures of local parish ministry, and she will be great at getting alongside and supporting people."



► Leanne Conway-Wilcox is joining our Generous Giving Team

Introducing our new Continuing Ministerial Formation Officer

Cecilia (Ce) Pacitti explains how she is helping clergy and readers within our Diocese

I AM the Continuing Ministerial Formation Officer (what a mouthful!) for the Diocese - it has already become the CMF Officer!

This is a new appointment and is part of the Mission and Ministry Team. My role is to support clergy and readers, with responsibility for ensuring that there is a rich pattern of further training and ongoing ministerial formation.

Previously Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) Officer, this newly-expanded post combines responsibility for the ongoing training for all licensed ministers with responsibility for helping to nurture their ongoing formation as disciples of Jesus Christ.

These are rapidly changing times for the Church of England and Newcastle Diocese which require constant adaptation to new challenges and opportunities whilst remaining faithful to the God who calls and sends.

This role is a key part of supporting clergy and readers as they remain rooted and growing in their faith and vocation but also learn to respond flexibly to a changing context. I'm passionate about the potential of formation and development through saying yes to God. The advert for the post started with 'The Church is the Body of Christ, the people of God and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom.'

I am looking forward to joining in where we see God at work across the Diocese. I'm a Reader at Gosforth Parish Church of St Nicholas, licensed in 2015, and have worn various hats as part of my ministry since then.



> Ce is passionate about 'formation and development through saying yes to God'

I am the North Shields Chaplain for Lindisfarne College of Theology. For the last few years I have also led the Reader Recruitment and Selection team, working with enquirers and co-ordinating selection panels.

My day-job throughout all of this time was working in Higher Education at Newcastle College and I have a background in life-long learning and adult education. I've spent my first few weeks out and about meeting people - ask your clergy and readers if we've met! If we haven't, we will soon. In the meantime, if you have any questions about training or other support please get in touch with me at c.pacitti@newcastle.anglican.org.

Church blossoms during flower festival

By Brian Bennett

REVD Anthony O'Grady, Vicar of St Bartholomew's in Newbiggin, has hailed the success of his church's annual fair which was held over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Father O'Grady revealed that the 'fair with a difference' was an overwhelming success: "It was a slightly modified and Covid-safe version but it nevertheless attracted scores of people," he said, "It was well attended and an overwhelming success - plus it was wonderful to see people reconnecting with each other."

A Flower Festival was held in church with the theme 'thankfulness' for all of those things that represents life in its fullness whilst a plethora of events was held in the Church Centre on Front Street.

Fr O'Grady continued: "I'd like to say a massive thank you to all those who helped to arrange our activities - and to those who came along to support them."



> Festival goers gave thanks for the efforts of the NHS throughout Covid-19. Photo credit: Carrie Stewart

Commissioning Service welcomes new officers



> Left to right, Nic Denyer, Bishop Mark, Ce Pacitti and Revd Rob Saner-Haigh

MEMBERS of our community have been welcomed into their new roles within the Diocese.

Ce Pacitti and Nic Denyer had their Commissioning Service at Gosforth Parish Church of St Nicholas on 13 September, to be welcomed as Continuing Ministerial Formation Officer and Lay Ministry Development Officer respectively.

The service was overseen by Bishop Mark with the Revd Rob Saner-Haigh, Director of Mission and Ministry, taking the role of preacher.

David Hide RIP

It is with great sadness we share the news that former Diocesan Secretary David Hide died on 24 August.

David was appointed as our first full-time Diocesan Secretary in 1973 and served in this role until his retirement in 1994.

A service of thanksgiving celebrating David's life was held on 10 September at All Saints Church, Gosforth, where David with his wife Hilary and their sons were much-loved members of the congregation.

David was born in Leatherhead in Surrey in 1931. After schools in Leatherhead, in 1944 he went as a Kings Scholar to Westminster School.

After a year teaching English at Perrot Hill School in Somerset, he was awarded an Exhibition to read English and History at Trinity College, Cambridge.

There followed a career as a personnel officer in various industrial



> Former Diocesan Secretary David Hide

concerns, beginning with a Worsted manufacturer in Stroud and culminating with the British Motor Corporation at Cowley in Oxford.

In that period he lived in various parts of the country, most significantly in Sheffield in 1958. There he met and married Hilary and the first two of their three sons were born, the third

coming after the move to Oxford in 1964, where for the next six years he was the BMC Oxford Area Personnel Manager.

In 1970 changes in the BMC organisation caused him to reassess his future direction. He decided to take voluntary redundancy and then for a couple of years worked as a consultant in industrial relations.

His becoming a Reader in the Church of England in 1954 in his time in Gloucestershire indicated that his vocation as a Christian had been in his mind for some time. He looked at two Diocesan Secretary posts which were available, one of which was Newcastle, and he was duly appointed to start work here in January 1973.

The following excerpts comes from an address given by the Venerable Bob Langley at the service of thanksgiving:

"Those who were here at the time remember what a change of style he brought with him. Here was someone who made himself available, who listened to what people had to say, who was as likely to offer help if a priest had problems with filling in

parish returns rather than a reprimand for making a mistake, which some reported had been often the case in the past. Fred Wilkinson who was Chair of the House of Laity in the Diocesan Synod, for part of David's time, said in a tribute to him on his retirement, that he had 'transformed what might be termed the face of diocesan administration' with an 'emphasis on courtesy and good-will, which no doubt reflects the way David sees the role of the administrative centre in relation to the diocese it serves'."

"During his 22 years considerable changes took place in the Church of England which impacted upon the role of Diocesan Secretary. Two very significant practical matters were the reducing number of stipendiary clergy and the switch from a considerable reliance on historic resources to a greater dependence on the living church. How many people can we afford to employ became a central question. The work done by David in reforming financial management procedures made that task more accessible. Those who had the job of going round deaneries and parishes trying to communicate the difficult message of the need for higher levels

of parish giving whilst recognising cuts in clergy numbers, were well resourced by David with presentations of charts and figures. The process reflected David's consultative style in engaging with members of parishes as much as possible in facing the issues of that time.

"It was also a time when some funding from Church Urban Fund began to come in for various specific projects. There was a plea made for some of the better off dioceses to support the poorer ones. David quickly negotiated with Graham Phillips, his counterpart in Winchester Diocese to set up a partnership between us. It continues to flourish 33 years later and over those years has included not just financial support for range of pieces of work, but the sharing of insights from two very different areas of the country."

Please pray for David, wife Hilary, sons Richard and Mark, his wider family and friends giving thanks for his life.

To read the Venerable Bob Langley's address in full, [click here](#).

Cathedral hosts wonderful welcome service

A JOYFUL welcome service took place in September to formally collate and install our new Archdeacon of Northumberland.

Revd Rachel Wood, previously Vicar at St Mary Monkseaton and then Acting Archdeacon of Northumberland, was appointed Archdeacon in May by Bishop Christine.

Our recently transformed Newcastle Cathedral provided the stunning backdrop for the special occasion which also included the welcome and installation of Bishop Mark, Bishop of Berwick; the Venerable Catherine Sourbut Groves, Archdeacon of Lindisfarne; and Revd Canon Rob Saner-Haigh, Director of Mission and Ministry.

Bishop Mark, Catherine and Rob have already been formally authorised for their ministry and active in their roles for some time, but had their installations delayed due to Covid restrictions and the re-ordering work at the cathedral.

Please pray for Bishop Mark, Rachel, Catherine, and Rob and for their ministries.

The Welcome, Collation and Installation Service is available to [watch here](#).



> Left to right, Revd Rachel Wood; Bishop Mark; the Very Revd Geoff Miller; Bishop Christine; Revd Canon Rob Saner-Haigh; and the Venerable Catherine Sourbut Groves



> Bishop Mark



> Revd Rachel Wood is collated and installed as Archdeacon of Northumberland



> Revd Canon Rob Saner-Haigh

Oswin Project opens Café 16 at cathedral

A NORTHUMBERLAND-BASED charity that gives second chances to carefully selected individuals who have been in prison has opened a new community café at Newcastle Cathedral.

Café 16 at the Cathedral is a joint initiative between Newcastle Cathedral, The Oswin Project, and London North Eastern Railway (LNER), which has provided financial support for the programme through its Customer and Community Investment Fund (CCIF).

The café will offer training, mentoring and employment to a team consisting exclusively of prison leavers, or 'Oswinners', to enable them to get their lives back on track.

The new café will follow the same model as The Oswin Project's successful flagship Café 16 (named after the 1916 Royal Flying corps station) in HMP Northumberland, with employment and training utilised as a vehicle to independence, personal growth, and fulfilling lives to prevent re-offending.

The cathedral café will be supplied with freshly-made produce from Café 16 and its Bakery in HMP Northumberland. Oswinners will gain experience, be supported and mentored, train, and achieve qualifications



> Café 16 has opened in Newcastle Cathedral

PICTURE: GRAEME PEACOCK

in catering, baking, cleaning, and other aspects to café operations. Those currently on the programme have provided extremely positive feedback, reporting increased self-confidence, perceptions of competence, and a growing optimism regarding life after prison.

Fiona Sample, Chief Executive

Officer of The Oswin Project, said: "We are thrilled to open Café 16 at Newcastle Cathedral. It is a café with a difference and the cake is guilt-free! Every item you purchase transforms lives and the ripple effect spreads. Oswinners obtain skills, and their lives gain purpose and routine. Their families benefit, as does the wider community."

Revd Canon Peter Dobson, Newcastle Cathedral's Canon for Outreach and Discipleship, said: "We are delighted to be working in partnership with The Oswin Project and LNER, to develop Newcastle Cathedral as a place of opportunity for all people, but most especially for those who find themselves, for all sorts of reasons, facing vulnerability and feeling marginalised.

"Ex-offenders, like others who are too easily marginalised, will have the chance to receive training and support, not only to run our new community café but also to take on other roles, helping us to assure that the cathedral is a place for all people, and a 'go-to' venue at the heart of the city.

"Our hope is not simply to provide experience to enhance CVs but for the cathedral to be a place where people are empowered in their sense of worth, built up in self-confidence and enabled to take hold of the dignity we all deserve. Our particular hope for Café 16 at the cathedral is that this endeavour, for those who are a part of it, will help to lead to further employment and many more great things!"

■ For more information and to read the delicious menu options, [click here](#).

Dr Kate Clarke RIP



> Dr Kate Clarke has sadly died, aged 82

MUCH-LOVED Reader Emeritus Dr Kate Clarke who was awarded an OBE in recognition of her distinguished medical career has sadly died.

Kate, Reader Emeritus at St Aidan's Brunton Park in the Team Parish of Christ the King, and before that at St Mary Magdalene Longbenton died on 29 July, aged 82.

In her professional career, she was a Consultant Anaesthetist, both at Newcastle General Hospital and working for the Royal Army Medical Corps and the International Red Cross, including in Nepal, Afghanistan and Somalia.

Among her achievements she was appointed the first female commander of a RAMC Unit. Her various activities were recognised through her appointment as Queen's Honorary Surgeon and as Deputy Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear.

In 1993 she was awarded the OBE for her humanitarian work with the Red Cross. Kate's funeral took place on Thursday 9 September at St Aidan's Brunton Park.

'All the adults need to join in with this'



➤ Revd Allison Hardy and Jac Atkinson with the youngsters at the final worship in Holy Spirit Sugley



➤ Jesus walks on water in Lego - Matthew 14:27

By Revd Allison Harding

THESE words from Mark Oliver of Scripture Union produced groans from the leaders – some of whom are in their 70s and almost all have joints that have seen better days – and great delight among young people aged four to 14, who relished the prospect of yet more success in the latest game of 'Blockie.'

We were all part of the holiday J.A.M. (Jesus And Me) club which took place in the last week of the school summer holidays.

The club came about through substantial partnership working. Sugley Church was the ideal venue, with a hall, a church and some green space all together on one site. Sue and Edith from Sugley came to the club every day and could not have been more helpful; every time I asked them 'Can I.....'; the words had hardly come out before they said 'Yes'. Wow!

Jacqueline Atkinson, the Children's and Family Missioner, led the club along with me. We built on the partnership that had already seen us work together through the summer of change last year and provide weekly deliveries of food parcels to those in need in our parishes. We also still had some money from Northumbria University Staff donations and

an anonymous gift from last year which meant we didn't have to think about money.

Each day a team of volunteers came across from Newburn and Throckley, and Sarah from Scripture Union ably supported Mark in all the outdoor activities. Warburtons provided us with bread to give to the families who needed it most, Fare Share provided food that could be included in lunches as well as some for the children to take home (chicken nuggets, mussels and yoghurts to name some of the items) and Talbot House Trust contributed their minibus free of charge - this meant we could pick people up every day from Newburn Parish and take them to the holiday club.

From the start, there was a great buzz about the J.A.M. club. Each day we worked around a Bible story shown on a film, with the Lego team working with the children to produce a model, the craft team helping them to create an image and the games team leading games which drew on the themes of the story. So, for example, when the day started with some input and a film about Jesus walking on the water and Peter attempting to do the same, the children recreated the story in Lego, produced images of footprints on water and played games where the focus was on keeping your eye on the ball. All the time

both young people and leaders were kept well supplied with food and drink by the kitchen team, one of whom had come to faith after her children had attended a previous holiday club in Newburn Parish only two years previously.

The first day we were slightly disappointed to have 12 children/young people, and almost all of them had a family connection to church. But - in an answer to prayer and with the help of Facebook - word got around. By the end of the week, 30 young people enjoyed some or all of the club, including some from the families who Jacqueline and I take food to every week. We could see how much everyone was enjoying themselves and the increase in numbers as the week went on spoke for itself.

Of course, we don't know whether the seeds that were planted will grow to fruition but we do know that there were young people and parents who will have heard the gospel message for the first time. Going over to the church on the last day to sing 'All through history' one more time and to give each of the young people a prize bag was a particularly happy memory. We all finished the week exhausted but with a great sense of satisfaction - along with relief that we no longer had to shout 'bus!' whenever one passed by.



➤ BISHOP Mark enjoyed a slice of the action at St Benedict's Cowpen, Blyth over the summer. A special celebratory event on 11 July marked the church's 60th anniversary. Guest of honour, Bishop Mark, is pictured here cutting the anniversary cake.

Launch of Advent and Christmas theme

'At the heart of Christmas' is the Church of England's theme for Advent and Christmas 2021.

At the heart of Christmas



Inspired by readings from the Gospels of Luke and John read at so many Christmas services, 'At the heart of Christmas' is an invitation to everyone to discover – or rediscover – the good news of God's saving love as revealed in the birth of Jesus.

It is also a challenge to each of us to ponder in our hearts – as Mary did – what the extraordinary events of the first Christmas might mean for us now and in the years ahead.

The national Church will release a range of digital and print content, branded with the 'At the heart of Christmas' theme, including reflections, national online services, A Church Near You resources, and printed materials such as Christmas cards, posters and flyers. [Click here](#) for more information on the theme.

A one-hour webinar about the 'At the heart of Christmas' resources and tips for making the most of your digital presence at Christmas time will take place on 13 October from 10-11am. To secure your place, [please sign up](#).

Pupils greet special visitor

BISHOP Mark has witnessed first-hand the resilience of pupils and teachers at two church schools in response to the disruption caused by Covid.

Having been consecrated at the height of the pandemic in the UK, the visit to Grace Darling C of E Primary School in Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Duke's Secondary School in Ashington was one of the first opportunities for Bishop Mark to get out to meet some of the children and young people in Northumberland.

During his visit, Bishop Mark was treated to a tour of the Grace Darling campus, visiting each class in turn to view their displays and find out how they were settling back into school.

He met with the school's 'Gardening

Gang' who look after the school's outdoor spaces and spoke with staff about the school's involvement in the Thrive programme for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in children.

At Duke's Secondary School campus, Bishop Mark met with the school's Principal, Russ Atkinson, and was shown around some of the classrooms where Covid catch up sessions were taking place for students in critical exam years.

The day was rounded off with a meeting of school leaders from across Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust, of which Grace Darling C of E Primary School and Duke's Secondary School are members.

Bishop Mark said: "I've been really impressed by what I've seen today. The resilience that has been shown by teachers and pupils during what has been an incredibly challenging time for schools is just amazing and it's great to see how people have come together to support each other. I'd like to thank Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust for having me today and I'll look forward to visiting again in future."

Alan Hardie, CEO at Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust, added: "It was wonderful to have Bishop Mark with us. At NCEAT, we value our close working relationship with the Dioceses of Newcastle and Durham and it is always a pleasure to host members of the clergy at our schools."



➤ Bishop Mark with staff and pupils from Grace Darling Primary School

How to be an Anna Chaplain when the doors are locked



> Joan Grenfell and right, residents in one of Joan's care homes partake in a moment of worship



By Joan Grenfell, Anna Chaplain with St George's Church

SUDDENLY, without warning, the doors were shut. Access to care home residents was no longer possible. As the Anna Chaplain for two care homes in my parish, what was I to do?

I decided to keep Thursday as my 'Anna Chaplain' day, praying for residents and staff and keeping in touch by phone.

That seemed to be all I could do, until I received an email from one of the care homes asking if I use Skype. My reply of "No, but can I learn?" helped open the door to a continuing ministry

I was able to offer a fortnightly service on Skype, and often used Zoom through the year,

to offer worship on All Soul's Day, Armistice Day, Carols by Candlelight (where family members connected), Candlemas, Ash Wednesday and Easter Day.

Perhaps the most necessary and moving service was the service of Light, Thanksgiving and Remembering, which happened on 23 March as part of the National Day of Reflection.

The degree of emotion felt by both residents and staff, evidenced during the service, showed how necessary this opportunity to reflect had been.

I have kept contact less technically with my second care home on Advent, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Day, Pentecost and Ascension, as well as cards sent in to residents and regular phone conversations with the manager.

I reflect on a year of much sadness. More residents than I could have imagined have lost their lives to the virus. However, there is movement and a gradual opening of doors and light ahead.

I am the named visitor for four residents who have no other visitor in one of the Care Homes, and so I can take and offer the Sacrament in person to these (after a lateral Flow Test each visit). We follow the time of worship talking and simply enjoying being people together again! I sense growth happening here in the months ahead.

When I am able to resume the ministry in person, I will see empty chairs and regular worshippers missing. However, God willing and in his grace, I will pick up the ministry once more, hopefully bringing God's love and presence to residents and staff alike.

Lockdown prayers boost charity coffers

By Tom Moorcroft

A BERWICK priest has put pen to paper during lockdown and produced a number of different prayer books for charity.

The collection, which has so far raised over £1,600 for charities within the North East, boasts three books with a variety of different prayers, poems, beautiful pictures and art to accompany the literature.



> Gabrielle poses with all three editions of her prayer poetry booklets

Rev. Gabrielle Ayerst decided to sell the books in order to raise money for those less fortunate. The donations were divided between a Berwick Foodbank and a community initiative tackling food waste called Northern Soul Kitchen, which supplies meals and groceries - using food which would otherwise end up in landfill - to those in need in return for a donation.

Reflecting on her unexpected urge to write and sell her prayer poetry, Gabrielle said: "It is difficult to explain how this period of creativity came about. It is one of a number of unexpected inspirations that God seems to have given me over the years, which has led me into different directions that I had not anticipated in my spiritual journey and friendship with God."

"The prayer poems have certainly kept me going during this long period of Covid and I loved being creative in this way, coupled with choosing photos I had collected to reflect the themes I wrote on. I was reminded of St Hildegard de Bingen who was to say that 'we are transformed by our creativity' and she was not wrong there!"

To contact Gabrielle about purchasing her prayer books, please send her an email to gabrielleayerst@hotmail.co.uk with the subject 'Prayer Poetry Booklets'. She would be grateful for any donations to be sent by note or cheque before she sends out the booklets.

How we re-engaged with our community after lockdown

By Margaret Weaver, Benefice of Acklington, Shilbottle and Warkworth

OVER the past few weeks we have been able to meet up again as long as we are sensible about contact and cleansing.

We have taken full advantage of this! The group which has been chatting over coffee on Whypay for the past months has been able to get together for face-to-face conversations in Shilbottle Community Hall every Tuesday morning.

We have also been joined by others, who would otherwise be sitting at home alone.

Once a month we stay after coffee and share a soup lunch together. The next one will be Tuesday 5 October from 12 noon to 1pm. Others are more than welcome to join us - it's all about fellowship and having someone to chat to, and our older members would welcome a chat with those they haven't seen in many months.

It is great that we have been able to use the NEED bus with its tail lift to transport those who are a bit wobbly on their feet. Our monthly Afternoon Church service, aimed at older people who find it difficult to attend regular worship on a Sunday morning, also took place in the hall this month, and we were able to employ the bus again. Those who came enjoyed a short service, with music for singing provided by our 94-year-old organist, followed by a short activity and a mini afternoon tea.

'Tea and talk' has resumed at Warkworth, following a successful afternoon tea on St Lawrence's day. One sunny Monday afternoon we managed to sit outside - out of the sun



> Bishop Christine joined individuals at Heatherdale Care Home for their monthly Zoom call

because it was too hot! The group now meet in Warkworth House Hotel on Monday afternoons 2.30pm to approx. 3.30pm. Others are welcome to come along and chat!

Contact with local residential care homes has been able to resume over the last few months, with gradually increasing personal contact. Residents from the Grange at Warkworth were able to make a visit to St Lawrence's church one afternoon recently.

We have not yet been able to visit in person at Heatherdale Care Home in South Broomhill, but we were very privileged to welcome Bishop Christine as she joined our monthly Zoom service at the end of August.

A home from home

By Canon Alan Hughes, Sheriff of Berwick

OUR spiritual home is the little Island of Iona, where my wife and I had our honeymoon over 50 years ago, just off the south western tip of Scotland's west coast Island of Mull.

Whenever we are missing Iona we only have to look out of our Berwick bedroom window and over to Holy Island to feel connected, as the spiritual community at Lindisfarne was founded in the year 635AD by St Aidan, one of the monks from our beloved Iona.

No one knows for certain when Christianity was first brought to the British Isles, possibly by way of Roman merchant ships. We do know for certain that St Columba brought Celtic Christianity to Iona from Ireland in 563AD and St Augustine brought Roman Christianity to Kent in 597AD.

The decision which should hold sway over Northumbria was made by Oswald after winning the Battle of Heavenfield near Hexham in 634AD, declaring himself to be a Celtic Christian King. After the battle, as he settled into ruling his Kingdom of Northumbria, Oswald sent to Iona for missionaries, for the long years of pagan domination



> Iona and Lindisfarne Priory

had virtually wiped out all traces of Christianity.

Aidan came with a few brother monks and settled on Lindisfarne, close to Oswald's seat of power at Bamburgh so beginning a long partnership, Church and secular powers working for the common good in practical as well as spiritual ways.

The priory which still stands on Holy Island and the abbey on Iona both date from around the 12th century. The original monastic cells and later churches founded by Columba and Aidan and their successors were both destroyed in successive Viking raids. The monks on Lindisfarne returned from their refuge at Durham after the Vikings either moved on or settled in a less aggressive manner, equally the



monks of Iona eventually returned from their refuge in Ireland. Thankfully the two great treasures from the linked communities survive largely intact to this day, The Book of Kells and The Lindisfarne Gospels.

We often take for granted all that surrounds us. Some say that many living in Edinburgh have never visited their famous castle, some Berwickers may not have ventured to Holy Island. If this is true, I certainly hope that these few words may encourage more to visit Iona and Lindisfarne. [Iona Abbey](#) is in the care of Historic Scotland, [Lindisfarne Priory](#) in the care of English Heritage.

This is an abridged version of Alan's article. To read the full article, [click here](#).

Newcastle to host YCCN pilgrimage for climate justice

In early October, Newcastle will be hosting young Christians on a pilgrimage which has spanned the length of the country.

By **Bethany Hume**,
Assistant Secretary

Their residency in the city will open with a Welcome Service and Celebration at Newcastle Cathedral, to greet pilgrims as they enter Newcastle.

The Young Christian Climate Network (YCCN) Relay set off immediately after the G7 summit in June and will reach Glasgow in time for COP26, taking this opportunity to call on world leaders to address the climate crisis.

Newcastle is one of ten residency cities along the pilgrimage route and the YCCN Relay will arrive into the city on Sunday 3 October. Events are being held 3 to 6 October by various churches across the city to welcome those walking the pilgrimage and campaign on the issue of climate justice in the lead up to COP26.

Events held throughout the week are open to all and raise awareness of the issues of climate change with discussions about practically responding to these challenges. These include an evening about climate finance at Holy Trinity Jesmond, hosted by the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility, followed by a question and answer session with cakes.

St Francis Church in High Heaton, a silver Eco Church, is hosting an afternoon eco festival as part of its celebrations of the Feast of St Francis.

Newcastle Cathedral invites you to a film screening of *Thank you for the Rain*, which tells the story of Kisilu, a smallholder farmer in Kenya who used his camera to capture the life of his family, and the human costs of climate change. To find out more and book events visit the [YCCN website](https://www.yccn.org.uk).

What other ways can I get involved in the YCCN pilgrimage to COP26?

The relay is organised by the Young Chris-

tian Climate Network, but anyone can get involved in walking part of the route, or supporting the walkers along the way.

People from across the Diocese will be walking in solidarity and to bear witness to the climate emergency. The relay is open to all ages and children are welcome to participate where they are accompanied by a legal guardian.

From Newcastle the relay route's next stage heads onwards to arrive in Holy Island on 13 October and then northwards through Ber-



3rd October, 4pm
Newcastle Cathedral
Pilgrims' Welcome Service & Celebration

4th October, 3-5pm
St Francis Church High Heaton
Feast of St Francis Eco Fest

5th October, 7.30pm
Holy Trinity Jesmond
ECCR Climate Finance event

6th October, 7.30pm
Newcastle Cathedral
Thankyou for the Rain Film Night

[YCCN.uk/Newcastle](https://www.yccn.org.uk/Newcastle)

[@YCCNetwork](https://www.yccn.org.uk)



Bookings & Details



Welcome the European Ecumenical Pilgrimage this October



> The pilgrims are walking **1,450km from Poland to Glasgow**. Photo credit: Thomas Puschnann

By **Tom Moorcroft**

PILGRIMS journeying from Poland to Glasgow will arrive in Newcastle this October as part of their efforts in raising awareness of climate change.

The pilgrims will be 59 days into their journey by the time they reach North Shields, and they plan to visit a number of regions on their way to Glasgow.

German evangelical national churches, Catholic dioceses and aid organisations have all rallied together to take part in the 1,450km route. They aim to call world leaders to take decisive action at COP26.

The pilgrims arrive in North Shields on 12 October to a welcome reception at St Cuthbert's Church, before walking along the coast through North Tyneside and onto Blyth, spending their first night at St Wilfrid's Church. On 13 October they will continue following the coast before stopping overnight at Widdrington, and on 14 October they will stay overnight in Alnmouth. This is followed by overnight stays in Seahouses on 15 October, Holy Island on 16/17 October and Berwick on 18 October.

The pilgrims would welcome the opportunity to meet with different church communities as they venture through Northumberland, and would love to engage in anything from tea and cake, people joining them for portions of the walk or even a prayer service for climate justice.

For more information on the pilgrimage you can visit the group's website [5th Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Climate Justice](https://www.5thecumenicalpilgrimage.org). You can also email their Pilgrim Organiser at chris.boer@kircheundgesellschaft.de, or the support for the Northumberland portion of the walk at chrisjmyers57@gmail.com.

Environment training webinars



ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

THE Church of England Environment programme is running webinars on various topics including fundraising and an introduction to Eco Church. Places on all webinars are free and are booked in advance using the links below:

■ Let all Creation Sing: Worship, Prayer and the Environment
Monday 27 September, 4-5pm. Find out more and [register here](#).

■ Climate Action as Mission
Thursday 30 September, 12-1pm. Find out more and [register here](#).

Recordings of the fundraising for environmental projects webinars are [available on Youtube](#).

To see the whole webinar programme, including recordings of previous sessions, visit the [Environment Programme webinars page](#).

Next Global Divestment Announcement

A COALITION of green Christian organisations is inviting churches to join the next [global divestment announcement](#) in October.

Operation Noah, Green Anglicans, the World Council of Churches, the Global Catholic Climate Movement and GreenFaith have united to campaign against climate change.

The announcement, which will take place on

JOIN THE NEXT

GLOBAL DIVESTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

25 OCTOBER 2021

25 October shortly before COP26, offers churches and other faith organisations an opportunity to emphasise the urgent moral imperative to divest from fossil fuels, given their destructive impacts on climate, biodiversity and human rights.

For more information or to register your interest, contact Bokani Tshidzu on bokani.tshidzu@operationnoah.org before 18 October.

HAVE YOUR SAY

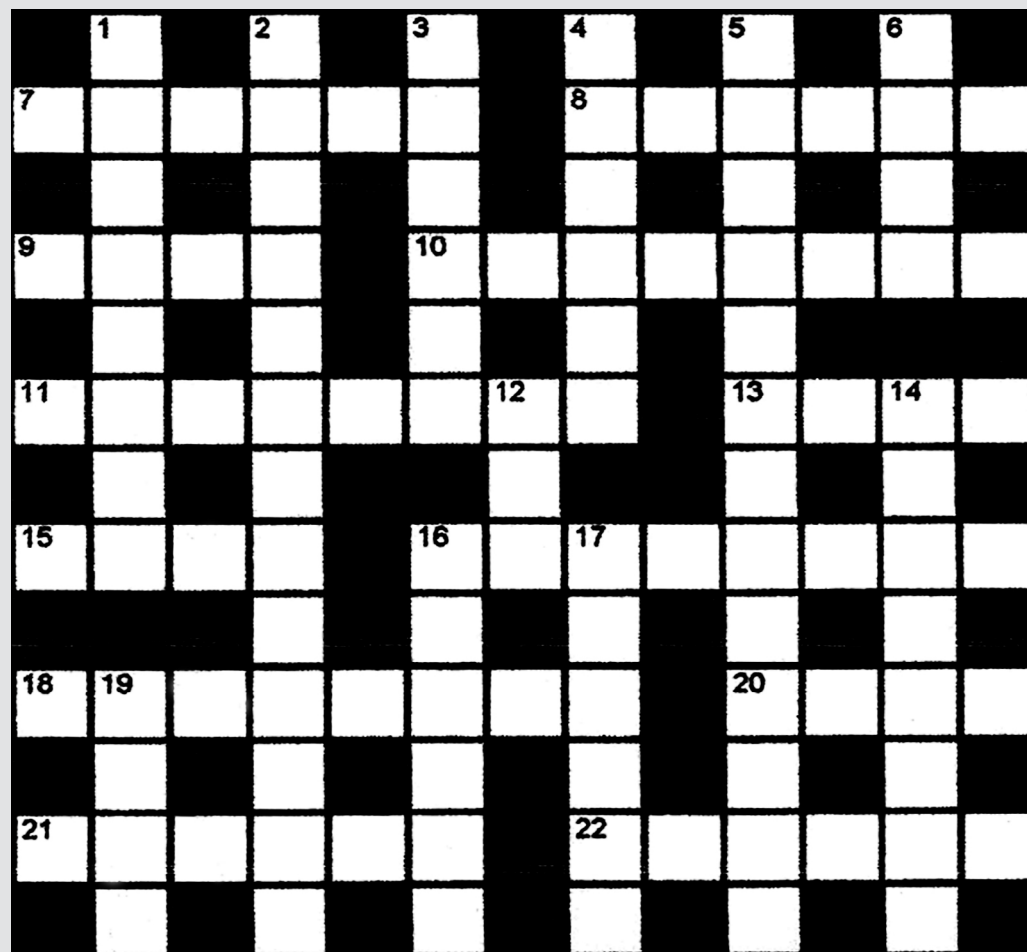
Anything catch your eye in this month's LINK?
Something on your mind?
Or in your prayers?
Send an e-mail, message or letter to LINK and we'll publish the best of them:

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

communications@newcastle.anglican.org

**Link Crossword 176** *Compiled by Mary Sutton*

This month we are including the crossword for anyone looking for something to keep them occupied during lockdown but just for fun (sorry, no prize this month). Please DO NOT submit crosswords to Church House.

**ACROSS**

7. Sole GP spoiling Matthew. E.g. (6)
8. Disorderly person from Brazilian city initially travelling with hesitation (6)
9. Mimics primates (4)
10. Free, one with copper before the French mock (8)
11. Protective covering left by one, about 50, referring to the Good Book (8)
13. One left in North east river (4)
15. Clutter found in homes sometimes (4)
16. Peer's son's wrong answer (8)
18. Upsetting him, Bruce's angels (8)
20. Humble Eastern kid initially follows me (4)
21. One politician with man originally emptying hamper (6)
22. Endless Oriental festival (6)

DOWN

1. Service involving school before row (8)
2. Scot leads peer to change statement of beliefs (8,5)
3. Member of the clergy, 100 – large man (6)
4. Concerning groom's partner with horse's headgear, say (6)
5. Cheat in no French class first becoming dissenter (13)
6. Beautiful woman mostly using ringing instrument (4)
12. Some special English beer (3)
14. Audience member providing register in French with hesitation (8)
16. Bandit making Bob err badly (6)
17. Tot, male, with the queen for a season (6)
19. Song the man heard (4)

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD 175

- ACROSS: 7. Bishop
8. Anthem 9. Fair
10. Entailed 11. Bachelor
13. Elms 15. Beta
16. Reverend 18. Creditor
20. Apse 21. Sinner
22. Eleven
DOWN: 1. Vicarage
2. Churchwardens
3. Appeal 4. Pastor
5. Strikebreaker 6. Fete
12. Ode 14. Minister
16. Return 17. Verger
19. Ruin

WITHSTANDING THE WEATHER

AT the bottom of and off to one side of a dip in the road, on one of my walks through moorland, is a stand of willows. On the opposite side of the road is an expanse of open access land. The land is rough, covered with heather, bracken (and the odd rhododendron!) and fairly flat. The wind blows straight across that land with little to break its impact before it hits the stand of willow.

Especially in spring and early summer the shape of the stand looks perfect. Seen from any angle it curves and bends to accommodate both the demands of the landscape and wind-scape. The rising ground on three sides provides a little protection from the full force of the wind that sweeps in from the open expanse across the road.

Walking down the hill and into the dip I can start to make out the individual trees, perhaps 30 or 40, that make up the stand. Each one has a different shape and height, and each one fits with its neighbours to form the pleasing and protective shape of the whole.

The outer trees provide the wind-break with low branches that pick up

Wellbeing

by **Patty Everitt**,
Counselling
Advisor
(Interim)



the wind and deflect it upward. The trees inside the stand grow to the optimal height and spread thereby creating an umbrella-like surface that smooths the wind's passage over the stand and, I guess, reduce eddies.

Take a tree out of the stand and it might look odd or even misshapen. Some have branches on one side only; others have branches at the top but nothing lower down; some have branches spread wide and others have tightly packed branches. However, the gap that any tree would leave would allow the wind to break into the stand and wreak havoc.

Each tree has its place and purpose in protecting the whole. In time, the neighbouring trees might adapt their shapes to make up for the loss of the

single tree. During that time the stand would no longer be perfectly adapted to its windy environment. It would survive and adapt to its loss, but it could not remain the same.

For a group that fits its environment well – whether that's a family, a congregation, a team, or a project – each member brings something unique. Take one person out of the group and on their own we might see them as odd or quirky, but within the group they have a place, a purpose and they fit. They provide something important to the group. Take one person out of the group then the group must change to accommodate the loss.

When a group functions well, and we know and accept our worth, then we can give our best. We can help shape it so it fits its environment. If we deny our worth or undervalue ourselves then we are unlikely to give what the group needs from us, to its detriment.

In other words, when we notice and value what we bring to others then we can offer our best and perhaps a sense of fulfilment, self-esteem and belonging follows when we do. If we don't then, perhaps we are just a little less than we could be and so are others.

We are the gift we have to offer the world. Value it; others do.

Shepherds Dene welcome new director



► Vanessa Ward

THE trustees of Shepherds Dene Retreat House are delighted to announce the appointment of their new director.

Vanessa Ward, currently Head of Enterprise at Durham Cathedral, will take over from Philip Davies, who has acted in an interim capacity since 2019.

Vanessa has held significant roles at Durham Cathedral since 2011 and has latterly been responsible for oversight of the Cathedral's retail, restaurant, events and

group/travel trade offer.

Speaking of her appointment, Vanessa said: "I am thrilled to be taking up the post of Director of Shepherds Dene at this important and exciting point in its development.

It will be a privilege and pleasure to work for Shepherds Dene which has a real sense of purpose in the way it delivers rest, refreshment and inspiration to those who visit.

"I look forward to working with

the trustees, staff and volunteers to broaden its reach and to share the delights of this wonderful retreat house with a wider audience."

The Revd John McManners, Chair of Trustees at Shepherds Dene, said: "We are delighted with this appointment. Vanessa brings many personal qualities and much relevant experience to the post. The trustees and staff are looking forward to working with her in the next chapter in the life of this much-loved retreat house."

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



IDENTITY CRISES?

ALL my life, I wanted to be a priest - or at least, the one at the front 'saying the words'. I truly believed that God was calling me to it, but it never really happened. I had a pretty good run at it a few years ago but towards the end of the attempt I was on the verge of burnout and found myself unable to complete some of the final work that was necessary to get me on to the next stage. Sometimes life doesn't work out the way you expect. Since then, I've been slowly coming to terms with the idea that 'future priest' isn't any longer a realistic self-definition.

For most of my adult life, I had a lot of active friendships and was involved in activity after activity, defining myself both by the number of people in my life and the constant stream of things I was doing. In the past few years, I've moved to a new town twice (once in the middle of the pandemic), and now have very few 'on-the-doorstep' friends with consequently very little regular activity to engage in. Sometimes life doesn't carry on the way you expect. Whilst I have truly appreciated the chances I've had to catch up with old friends, I'm starting to learn that 'involved with everything and everybody' may have been a contributing factor to the burnout mentioned above. It certainly isn't a healthy aspiration to work towards the same thing in a new place just because that's how my life used to be.

For over a decade I was clinically depressed. It coloured everything I thought and felt about myself. I started to learn to live with it, fully expecting to always feel that way. But, I gradually recovered to the point where 'depressed Tim' has not been a valid self-definition (if it ever was) for a good number of years. Sometimes, life works out better than you expect and you still need to work out what to put in the gap it leaves.

Sometimes life doesn't work out the way we expect. Sometimes we have to re-evaluate pretty much everything about ourselves and what's left, when what we thought was 'us' is no longer a reliable part of our lives.

Whilst the examples above may have formed part of my identity, they were never the whole of it, despite any overwhelming feelings to the contrary. Just as today, 'husband', 'father', and 'library assistant' are parts of my life, they are far from being all that I am.

Is there something that encompasses all these disparate parts - past, present and future? Jesus tells us that we are God's children, that I am his child, that you are his child and that we are loved by God even when we find ourselves far from home, having squandered our many gifts, having lost all and any traces of who we might have thought we were, and eating pigswill. We are children of a loving God who not only welcomes us back but, in a quick switch of parables, shows us the way home.

TOWARDS A SAFER CHURCH

www.newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding

Are you using the Parish Dashboard?

PARISH Dashboards, most parishes now speak of little else...apart from being Generous, Open and Engaged in mission.

Our safeguarding team is greatly encouraged by the response from parishes - 95 per cent of users agreed that they found their dashboard easy to manage, and 85 per cent that they would recommend the system to parishes yet to begin the process of equipping themselves to meet safeguarding requirements.

As of mid-August, 179 parishes have begun working their dashboards, ten parishes already at level three, 48 at level two, and 53 at level one.

Here is a small selection of positive feedback quotes:

- "I really like the simplicity and straightforwardness of the dashboard. It is easy to use, gathers everything into one place and immediately produces the action plan. It certainly is clear and simple."
- "I was worried that this was yet another job for PSOs, but following the training I'm so pleased we have it. Essentially it's a fancy checklist that makes sure I've done my job right. It's great."
- "At first this seems daunting, but it is very simple to use. I like the traffic lights as they make it easy to see what needs to be done."

There was one area of criticism - "we can't move on as the safer recruitment courses are not available yet classed as urgent action." Their unavailability was a national issue and the courses have now fully launched.

The Basic and Foundation courses are now available for all PCC members and those working with children and vulnerable adults.

The online learning module for Safer Recruitment and People Management is now live on the **Safeguarding Training Portal**. The link for the course is on the home page and can also be found under 'Online Courses'. It can also be taught locally in the parish by the parish safeguarding lead.

The Church of England is committed to promoting a safe environment and culture across all church bodies for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

An essential part of this commitment is ensuring that all those who work or volunteer with vulnerable groups are suitable for the role they will carry out. More than 3,000 parishes across 24 dioceses are using Safeguarding Dashboards to support their parish safeguarding.

For those without access to computers, training material is available from Donna Brown, Safeguarding Operations Officer, who is more than happy to answer questions on this or any other safeguarding issues. She can be contacted at d.brown@newcastle.anglican.org or 07436220861.

Noticeboard

Wednesday 6 October, 2-3.15pm, via Zoom. 'Take Time': An RRC Workshop with Helen

Session leader, Helen Connell, introduces the concept of Take Time and how it can be used in your church, school or community. It will include a 20-minute meditation, information about how you can become a practitioner in your own context and an opportunity to find out what happens during a Take Time Together Group. Questions are encouraged and Helen will also give you details of coming training events and how you can access the resource online.

To book contact the RRC on 0191 375 0586, or [email enquiries@resourcescentreonline.co.uk](mailto:email.enquiries@resourcescentreonline.co.uk)

Saturday 23 October, 11am-3pm. Prior's Hall, Durham Cathedral. An Anglican Centre in Rome study day: on Ecology and Christian Unity

Dr Carmody Grey of the Catholic Theology Department in Durham University will speak on Laudate Si and ecology - as the UN Climate Change conference in Glasgow approaches. What does our common heritage as Christians offer the world? Cost £25 including coffee and lunch.

To book, send your name and address, email and telephone number

to jmhspr@aol.com and for online banking transfer £25 to Chapter of Ripon Cathedral, Sort code 40-38-23, a/c no. 20292109, reference: General Fund ACR. For alternative payment contact above email.

Wednesday 24 November, 6.30pm. Online event: 'Is God Northern?'

In this free online event, hosted by York St. John University, Nigel Rooms, Elli Wort, and Kate Fox come together to discuss how they define northern identity, and whether it relates to ideas about class, and whether there is a particularly northern type of Christianity. **Click here** to register your place.

Saturday 27 November, 10am-3pm. St Andrew's Church, Newcastle. Day of Prayer for the Mission of the Church

Every parish will be prayed for, and we would like to invite each parish in the Diocese to send at least one representative. The day is an opportunity for us to gather and pray for the mission of the church in each place. We will celebrate the Eucharist together, at which Bishop Mark will preside. Lunch will be provided. For further details and to book your place, please contact Father Adrian Hughes revajh@virginmedia.com

Visit www.newcastle.anglican.org/events for events taking place across the Diocese

Key dates for the diary

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



> An online service of reflection takes place in November

As we move further into the autumn, leaving behind that 'new term' feeling of September and the celebrations of Harvest-time, we approach a season of reflection and remembrance. This year Christian Aid offers you three ways to make a positive difference as you take stock and look back

Monday 8 October, 7pm, Online. 'Talking About Legacy Giving at Church'

We know how difficult it can be to talk about will-writing and gifts in wills. Kathy Childress, Christian Aid's Training Specialist will run a free, interactive workshop to make it easier. The session will highlight the value of legacy gifts to Christian Aid, but the main focus will be on supporting congregations to talk about legacies in church. The session is open to anyone with an interest in the subject! Topics will include: gifts in wills and your church; what stops us talking about gifts in wills; what motivates charitable legacy giving; five ways to make it easier to talk

about gifts in wills. Sign up [here](#).

November is Will Aid Month

Making or updating a will is so important, but something many of us put off. However now is the perfect time to get your affairs in order.

During Will Aid month in November, participating solicitors waive their usual fees.

Instead, you're invited to make a voluntary donation which is split across nine charities, including Christian Aid. This directly funds life-changing work in the UK and around the world.

Appointment booking is now open - but please do hurry, as they are in high demand.

To book, or for queries, call the Will Aid hotline on 0300 0309 558 or visit its [website](#)

Tuesday 2 November, 5.30pm, Online. 'From Darkness to Light,

an online service of reflection'

You are warmly invited to a special Christian Aid online service of reflection called From Darkness to Light. We have all been through such enormous change and loss in these last, nearly two years, especially those who have lost a loved one.

The service is a time for us to come together in a moment of comfort, hope and solidarity to remember and reflect. Along with gifts in wills, donations made in memory of a loved one to the work of Christian Aid are so very special.

They are each a unique expression of love, celebrating lives and enabling our loved ones' values to live on. The service allows a moment for us to honour them and to give thanks.

Please visit caid.org.uk/reflection for information and to sign up to join the service.



Call for churches to host 'joyful' Christmas performance

FOLLOWING a sell-out year in 2019, 'Journey of the Magi' is back, looking for churches across the Diocese to host them through Advent 2021. Your church could share the wonder and joy of Christmas with an exhilarating, critically acclaimed performance.

'Journey of the Magi' asks you to compare your own personal journey to that of the wise men on Christmas day, with sparkles, songs and bags of humour for good measure.

To learn more about the production, please visit the [Springs Dance Company's website](#). For information on how your church could host a performance, email Springs Dance Company on touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk, or call them on 07876 752 910



Spotlight on Northumberland National Park churches

TEN churches nestled in Northumberland National Park feature in a new online guide.

The National Churches Trust has launched the new visitor's guide on its [Explore Churches website](#), offering people the opportunity to discover these amazing national heritage sites while exploring the UK's national parks.

One of these churches is St Michael and All Angels, Alnham. It is believed that the original church was built on the site of a small Roman camp, which most probably was used as a centurion's guard to protect their herds of cattle when grazing during the summer in the rich pastures on the bank of the river Aln above Whittingham.

The church also has connections to the gunpowder plot of 1605 and is clearly mentioned in a formal written document of 1597 between Henry, ninth Earl of Northumberland and his cousin, Thomas Percy, one of the leaders of the plot.

St Mungo, Simonburn, also features in the list. People have lived in the vicinity since prehistoric times, there are rock carvings nearby. The church is 13th century, on the site of an earlier 8th century building, with strong associations with Saint Mungo (also known as Kentigern). In medieval times the parish covered the largest area in England.

We also see St Cuthbert, Corsenside, featured. Rooted in its landscape this is a remarkable little church, isolated but intimate. Open to the elements, offering shelter



> The mighty St Cuthberts in Corsenside, said to be a former resting place for the coffin of St Cuthbert

on the hill, Corsenside has a strong claim to be an authentic resting place for the coffin of St Cuthbert (c634-687AD) when the monks of Lindisfarne carried it from Holy Island following Viking raids on the east coast.

Over 200 churches and chapels found in the UK's 15 National Parks are featured in the new online visitor's guide, which has been produced to mark 70 years since the first National Park was created.

Bill Bryson, a Vice-President of the National Churches Trust, said it's 'impossible to overstate the importance of churches to this country'.

He added: "Nothing else in the built environment has the emotional and spiritual resonance, the architectural distinction, the ancient, reassuring solidity of a parish church. To me, they are the physical embodiment of all that is best and most enduring in Britain."

Candles for Charity appeal

THE founder of a Northumberland-based charity which recycles part-used candles into new ones is appealing for donations.

Revd Dr John Harrison, a retired priest who lives near Haydon Bridge, launched the charity in 1994 and has raised thousands of pounds for various causes over the years.

He said: "As many folk around the Diocese already know, I collect part-used candles (church and or domestic) which I recycle to make new candles. These are then sold and the proceeds sent to various local, national and international charities.

"Demand for our candles increases as

Christmas approaches so if any parish, church groups, or individuals have old candles to dispose of, we would be very pleased to receive them soon."

Old candles can be left at (in boxes or plastic bags please):

■ East Cottage, Plunderheath, Haydon Bridge (NE47 6JU) - collecting bin at the upper gate

■ The entrance to St Cuthbert's church Haydon Bridge (not open every day)

■ The General Havelock Inn in Haydon Bridge

John already has a supply of mainly red Christmas candles already in stock at East Cottage, Plunderheath.

Ted Thompson, affectionately known as 'Candle Ted', is another candle producer in our Diocese and trades as Moorlands Candles. Ted has produced some blue and white baptism candles (pictured) for Revd Mark Nash-Williams. Mark is happy to supply both the baptism candles and Ted's signature flame candles - ideal for confirmations - to other churches, boxed (plain for flame candles), for £2.50 plus p&p.

