

SUMMER 2024

# LINK

The magazine for the Diocese of Newcastle

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A photograph of three people, two women and one man, all smiling and wearing white clerical robes with black collars. They are standing in front of a large stone building with Gothic-style windows. The woman on the left is looking towards the camera, the man in the center is looking slightly to the right, and the woman on the right is holding a small black book and looking towards the camera.

## Welcoming our new ordinands

Full story plus more pictures: **Pages 4&5**



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@ncldiocese

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We'll be printing Link magazine quarterly but will continue to publish Link Extra in-between, which will be available to view or download on our website [newcastle.anglican.org/link](http://newcastle.anglican.org/link). If you would like to submit content for Link Extra please contact [communications@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:communications@newcastle.anglican.org)

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## About this magazine

**Feedback:** [communications@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:communications@newcastle.anglican.org) or 0191 270 4100 and ask to be put through to the Communications Team.

**Sustainability:** We use a Carbon Balanced printer to produce this publication. The printer works with global



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# A message from Bishop Mark



The Rt Revd Mark Wroe,  
Bishop of Berwick

## Seek first

**O**ne of the most frequently asked questions in our house is: 'Have you seen my...?' And then insert at the end of that question: keys, glasses, phone, wallet, cup of coffee or any number of other regularly lost items!

I hesitate to think how many hours I've spent searching for lost things. Of course, I'm in good company when we think about the stories of Jesus: the woman searching for her missing coin or the shepherd looking for the lost sheep (Luke 15). Parables, which like Jesus' ministry to the outcast and overlooked, remind us that God is always actively seeking us out.

So, it should be no surprise that Jesus encourages his followers to 'Seek first the Kingdom of God.' This means reflecting something of the nature of our God who is never content to sit back, but who is always dynamic, always seek-

ing the other, and moving towards us with compassion and love.

We are called to join in with God's seeking: looking for the activity of the Kingdom of God in our lives and communities. Many of Jesus' parables compare the Kingdom to small things, or hard to discern things – in other words looking for things that can take some time or hard work. As we work out our diocesan calling to be **seeking, sharing** and **sending** together, we start with the invitation to **seek first**. To **seek first** God's Kingdom: to notice where we see God at work, where good news is bubbling up, where justice and peace are breaking out in communities, where God's healing and restoration can be recognised in lives being changed.

This is something we do on many levels. We might not have lost our keys or our glasses, but we can sometimes lose our sense of perspective or hope. In the coming months, we are collectively invited to **seek first** where

God's Kingdom is coming among us. It begins in our own lives as we pray for God to reveal signs of the Kingdom in the places we live and work. It continues in our churches and congregations as we pray for God to show us where good news is being proclaimed in deed and word. It grows as we partner, plan and pray across our communities and deaneries, and throughout our diocese: together looking for where God is blessing, healing, challenging or growing new life among us.

'Lord, let our eyes be opened!' is the prayer and request of the blind men to Jesus in Matthew's Gospel. We need help to see and to recognise God's coming Kingdom. Let's make this our prayer too as we **seek first** where God is and join in: 'Lord, let our eyes be opened!'

We might even find the car keys too.

**Bishop Mark**

**If you are interested in exploring Christian vocation further, please speak to your parish clergy in the first instance. For further advice please be in touch with our Director of Ordinands and Vocations, Stephen Tranter: [ddo@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:ddo@newcastle.anglican.org)**



# Petertide Ordinations 2024

## A weekend of joy at the Cathedral



Left to right: The Very Revd Lee Batson, Bishop Mark, Lee Kirkby, Claire Lewis, Abi Harris, Francesca Walsh, Jon Grogan and Bishop Helen-Ann



James Bartle pictured with Bishop Mark, the Bishop of Beverley Stephen Race, and Bishop Helen-Ann



Bishop Helen-Ann and deacons during the service



The new deacons pictured during the service



The new priests with Bishop Mark during the service



Abi Harris



Jon Grogan and his wife Fiona with Bishop Mark



**T**here was great joy at Newcastle Cathedral as this year's Petertide Ordinations took place at the end of June. Three new priests were ordained by Bishop Mark on Saturday 29 June – the Revd Mairi Howell, the Revd Alex Firman, and the Revd Hannah Malcolm.

Please pray for them, their parishes and the communities they serve.

The following day, Sunday 30 June, saw five of our new deacons ordained by Bishop Helen-Ann.

Lee Kirkby, Claire Lewis, Abi Harris, Francesca Walsh and Jon Grogan were all given a wonderful welcome.

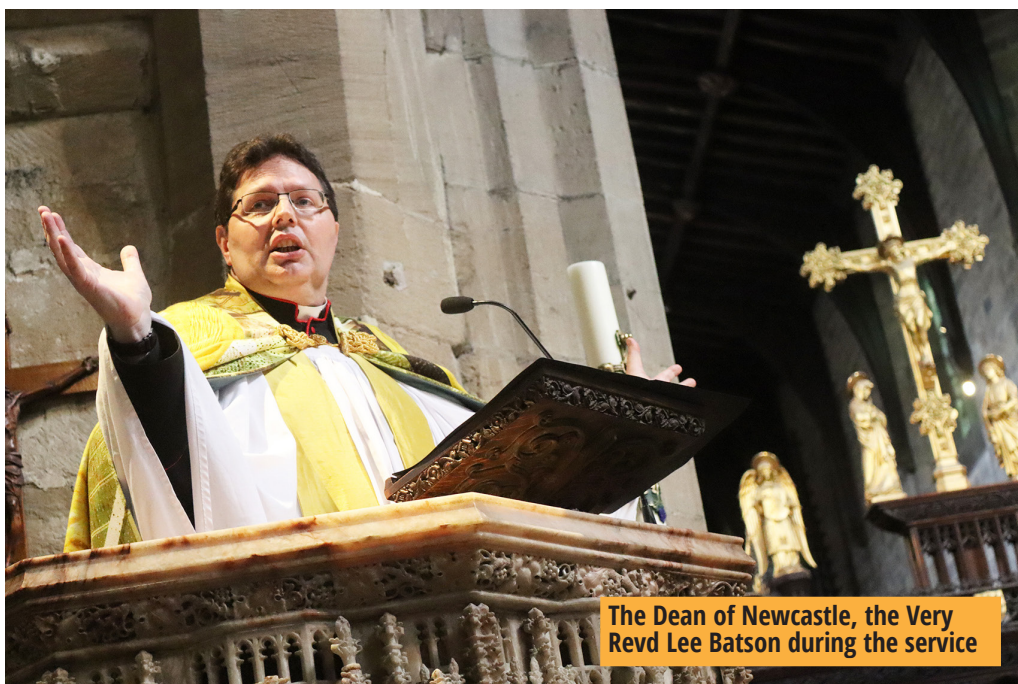
Please pray for them as they enter the next chapter of their ministry.

On both days, the Cathedral was packed with friends and loved ones for what were joyous occasions.

James Bartle was ordained as Deacon on 2 July and Deborah Ehala will be later in the year.



The new priests pictured during the service



The Dean of Newcastle, the Very Revd Lee Batson during the service



The Revd Hannah Malcolm, Bishop Mark, the Revd Alex Firman and the Revd Mairi Howell



Lee Kirkby and family



Francesca Walsh and family with Bishop Helen-Ann



# A warm welcome for school leavers



**Y**ear 4 and Year 6 pupils preparing to move schools this summer were welcomed to special leavers' services at Newcastle Cathedral.

Almost 600 pupils from schools across the Diocese attended the services over three busy days in June.

After an introduction to prayer from Diocesan Youth Adviser, Susan White, the children took part in prayer-related activities. They also recalled special memories from their time at school which they gave thanks for.

Other tasks included writing and drawing about challenges they were currently facing,





# at Newcastle Cathedral

while acknowledging people who had helped them during their time at school so far.

The art and craft related activities also enabled the pupils to reflect on the transition from one school to the next, before they attended a short service led by the Very Revd Lee Batson, Dean of Newcastle, where the children could share a special object from their school.

Each session also had a different speaker with Bishop Mark, Archdeacon Catherine and Bishop Helen-Ann each taking a turn.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped with these events, particularly students from NCEA Duke's Secondary School who enthusiastically led stations on each of the three days.





# Salt & Light: A festival of faith and



The Revd Canon Dr Benjamin Carter, Diocese of Carlisle, Bishop Helen-Ann and The Rt Revd Anna Eltringham, Bishop of Ripon

**D**elegates from five northern Church of England dioceses gathered near Hadrian's Wall in mid-June, near to the space once occupied by the famous Sycamore Gap tree, in a celebration of our rural communities.

The Salt & Light Festival was a partnership involving Newcastle, Carlisle, Durham, Leeds and York dioceses and saw those leading and working in the rural north exploring opportu-

nities for spiritual growth, discussing economic challenges and sharing ideas and learning.

The festival, which was opened by Bishop Helen-Ann, took place at The Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre near Hexham on 14th and 15th June. It followed the success of a similar event, 'Small, Faithful, Rural' in 2022 which also brought together rural specialists from across the northern dioceses.

Keynote speakers and workshops at 'Salt &

Light' helped explore the historical, spiritual, and socio-economic lenses through which we can understand our contexts.

Speakers included:

- Frances Ward, author, theologian and former Dean of St Edmundsbury
- Michelle Brown, cultural historian and author of one of the History Today books of 2023, Bede and the Theory of Every-



Bishop Helen-Ann



The Revd Julia Lacey and the Revd Diana Johnson



# hope on Hadrian's Wall



Salt & Light delegates on the roof of The Sill

thing

- Patrick Laurie, hill farmer, blogger and author of *Native: Life on a Vanishing Landscape* which was shortlisted for the "Wainwright Prize for UK Nature Writing"
- Sally Shortall, Duke of Northumberland Chair of Rural Economy at Newcastle University.

Bishop Helen-Ann said: "I am extremely

proud of our rural communities and the crucial role they play in the life of our region. The Church is often at the very heart of these communities, so it is important that we play an important part in helping ensure they survive and flourish, both spiritually and economically. Many of the challenges they face will be similar across our five dioceses, so this was a wonderful opportunity for us not only to celebrate these communities, but also to share learning on how to protect them for future generations."

Other speakers at the festival talked about the importance of protecting God's creation and how landscapes inspire our imagination, the challenges being faced by our once thriving farming communities. These then encouraged lively discussions from all involved about how the Church could learn from these insights and continue to act as signs of hope in and for the rural communities they serve across the north of England.



Communion at the Salt & Light Festival



Bishop Helen-Ann with the Rt Revd Anna Eltringham, Bishop of Ripon



# Looking ahead to Generous Giving Week 2024

**The fourth annual Generous Giving Week in Newcastle Diocese is fast approaching – and there are many ways in which people and churches can play their part.**

The week (29 September to 6 October) is an eight day period where we can reflect on generosity and respond to God's generosity to us.

The theme is explored further by Bishop Helen-Ann in her video message <https://newcastle.anglican.org/generosity-week-2024/>, which looks at generosity in light of the first part of our diocesan vision 'Seeking' - and giving thanks for our generous God who seeks us in everything we do.

In the build-up to Generosity Week, there will be an opportunity to spend time with the Generous Giving Team to explore how we embed a generous culture and how we communicate the need for generous giving.

In September, Giving Ministry Adviser Dennis Fancett will be hosting a four-part online course via Zoom for anyone who would like to take part. The course will focus on generosity from a Biblical perspective.

And on Wednesday 11 September, the Generous Giving Team, in conjunction with our diocesan Communications Team, will be holding a drop-in

day at Church House.

They will be available to offer practical, hands on support for anyone who wishes to follow up on activity and preparations over the summer and ensure their parish communications are ready to go in time for Generosity Week.

In addition, the team is supporting parishes with generous giving in their own church communities.

Generous Giving Team Leader Joanne Christie said: "One of the things we have developed is a suite of templates to allow parishes to produce a bespoke booklet that effectively



## Generosity leads to swift action on church roof

A dedicated congregation is "surprised and delighted" at the speed at which £30,000 was raised to complete an essential church maintenance project.

Christ Church in North Shields launched a fundraising appeal in March 2023 after it became evident that the roof of its iconic square tower, which stands at 100ft high, required urgent repairs.

At 355 years old, the church is one of the oldest and largest buildings in North Tyneside, and last underwent major works in the 1990s.

To protect the tower's roof from the worst of the weather, pointing work needed to be carried out, as well as the painting of woodwork, while deteriorating lead needed to be replaced to secure a stained-glass window in the tower's bell ringing chamber.

Thanks to a dedicated campaign, the funding was received as a result of grants and generous donations, both large and small, before the work was completed



Specialist workers are suspended by ropes as they scale the church tower, and above right, A pie chart on the church tower wall shows the fundraising progress in August 2023 and February 2024

earlier this year.

"It has been quite remarkable," said Mike Scott, who has been associated with Christ Church for 79 years and is currently treasurer of the bell ringers there.

"For a relatively small congregation we were delighted and surprised at how

quickly the funding came in. We have been supported by numerous charitable organisations around Tyneside.

"We received a substantial amount of donations from people, both churchgoers and non-churchgoers, from those who love the sound of the bells and appreciate that this is a prominent and



communicates the importance and need for regular generous giving in their individual context."

In July, two successful clinic days took place at Battle Hill and Wideopen respectively, where church representatives could meet the Generous Giving Team in person and receive support and advice.

A clergy reflection day is being held at Shepherds Dene House on Wednesday 25 September, during which participants will be invited to reflect on and deepen their response to God's generosity to us all.

For more information visit our website: [www.newcastle.anglican.org/generosity-week-2024/](http://www.newcastle.anglican.org/generosity-week-2024/) or scan the QR code.

#### historic building in North Shields.

"We are extremely grateful to everyone for their generosity and for taking such a keen interest, as well as to the skills of those who carried out the work."

Among the donations was £2,000 from the church's bell ringers themselves, while Mike said much credit goes to former vicar, the Revd Glyn Evans, who approached many of the funding charities ahead of his retirement last year.

Christ Church avoided the cost of erecting scaffolding, with skilled professionals carrying out the specialist work while suspended by ropes.

Mike, who has been bell ringing for 63 years and is a former churchwarden, has witnessed numerous changes at Christ Church throughout the decades.

He said a similar project was carried out back in 1996, which also included the re-modelling of the porch and door on the ground floor of the church tower.

## Slate sponsoring leads to generous giving for church roof project

A generous church community in rural Northumberland has come up with a creative solution to a roofing problem.

The historic church of St John the Baptist, at Lowick, is part of the Flake Churches which also includes the neighbouring communities of Ford, Ancroft, Kyloe and Etal.

The tower at St John's has been a distinguishing feature for generations, with the roof made up of more than 1,000 slates.

But some of the slates have become unstable after years of exposure to the elements, and work is needed to replace the weather-beaten slates and ensure there is no danger of them falling to the ground. The project is expected to cost at least £12,500 and fundraising is now underway.

Church member John Dickson got to work after being given an unusual task by Priest in Charge, the Revd Charlotte Osborn.

He explained: "There was an idea that people could sponsor a slate, and if they did so, their name would be sculpture-painted on the underside of the slate and visible from the inside of the tower.

"I was asked to make a model of the tower, so people could see the plan close up and add their names to a slate on a smaller-scale version of the real thing."

After John made the model with plywood, it was painted by local artist Polly Sutherland and made an appearance at the Lowick Fete in June, where there was much interest in the project.

About 50 slates were sponsored, with people from the community and also visitors to the area making contributions to the tune of £600. A further £500 was donated from the fete organisers.



John Dickson and Polly Sutherland with the model

In addition, the project is set to receive about £7,000 from the Northumbria Historic Churches Trust, which helps churches with the cost of renovation and repairs, following a successful application for grant funding.

John said other grant applications were being made while fundraising efforts within the community would continue. Anyone wishing to donate and sponsor a slate are welcome to get in touch.

He added: "This has been a very engaging project so far. The community has really bought into it and we've also had some anonymous donations. People have been very generous and there are also non-churchgoers who want to contribute because they love the church building and appreciate its significance in this community."

If you wish to make a contribution, please make your intentions known by emailing the finance officer, [jonathangibbs4@btinternet.com](mailto:jonathangibbs4@btinternet.com). Alternatively, there is a contactless machine in the church.



# Royal Visit: The Duke and Duchess of

**T**he Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were made very welcome as they visited Newcastle Cathedral earlier this summer.

The visit, on Wednesday 22 May, was a part of their ongoing tour aimed at highlighting the significance of cathedrals as places of worship and experiencing the good work they do.

Ms Lucy Winskell OBE, the Lord-Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, introduced Their Royal Highnesses to the Very Reverend Lee Batson, Dean of Newcastle. The Dean warmly received the Royal guests and provided an overview of the Cathedral's social outreach projects.

The Duke then embarked on a heritage tour guided by Amy Outterside, the Cathedral's Learning and Activities Officer, and Abby Hammond, a PhD student in history at Northumbria University who is currently working alongside Newcastle Cathedral.

Director of Music Ian Roberts introduced the Duchess to a group comprising Laura Oldfield, the Cathedral's choral development officer, and representatives from Wingrove Primary School (teacher Sadaf Chaudry and placement student Katelyn Johnston).



Also among the group were Rosemary Downey and Victoria Eyre, members of the Cathedral Music Trust, with whom the Duchess serves as Royal Patron. They discussed the Cathedral's rich musical offering and its involvement in the National Schools Singing Programme.

En route to Café 16 at the Cathedral, Their Royal Highnesses viewed the Story Chair and learned about its creation alongside the Changing Lives programme, and women who have experienced the criminal justice system. They also stopped at the Danish Memorial, which proved to be a poignant moment for Her Royal Highness, who was born and grew up in Denmark.

## Volunteers' Week Service at Newcastle Cathedral



On Tuesday 4 June, Newcastle Cathedral hosted a Volunteers' Week Celebration Service, honouring volunteers from the Cathedral, the wider city, and the Diocese. The event highlighted the remarkable contributions volunteers make across various organisations.

The service featured inspiring stories from Leigh Newman of the NHS and Nimerta Vird-ee from Connected Voice. Contributions from The Very Revd Lee Batson, Dean of Newcastle, and the Cathedral's Volunteer Coordinator, Vanessa Ward, emphasised the invaluable impact of volunteers' work.

The first-of-its kind celebration was well-at-



# Gloucester at Newcastle Cathedral



At Café 16, the Duke and Duchess joined guests including Bishop Helen-Ann and listened to the Revd Canon Peter Dobson discussing the Cathedral's social outreach projects, including a short film about the Lantern Initiative. They also learned about the Café's founding charity, the Oswin Project, which helps people with criminal records to find employment, training and support.

The visit concluded with a superb performance by members of the Cathedral's Choir. Their Royal Highnesses met and spoke with choristers, including some of the youngest members, and were presented with the Choir's recently released CD, 'A Year at Newcastle', available from



Regent Records.

Before departing, The Duke praised the Cathedral's community work and mission.

He said: "It is a delight to come and hear this wonderful choir, which is obviously unique in its own way, just as every cathedral has its own character.

"Long ago, I studied architecture, and clearly, cathedrals are all about design and so on. But, as you get older, you realise it's not just about having a wonderful building.

"It's about what it symbolises – it symbolises



history; it symbolises community and the collective effort to create something special. It enables people to take pride in their locality, encouraging them to help their community as our Christian teachings suggest we should.

"I'm delighted to hear about all the things you are doing with the Cathedral, and I hope it inspires others to lead more fulfilling lives. I would like to congratulate you on what you have done, and I hope you will continue this excellent work in the years to come."

To learn more about the Cathedral's vibrant life and how you can support our work, please visit [newcastlecathedral.org.uk/community](https://newcastlecathedral.org.uk/community).

## celebrates the city and diocese's volunteers



tended, with chaplains and staff from the Cathedral, Changing Lives, Northern Pride, and several other groups present. One dedicated volunteer even travelled from Carlisle to join the event.



Vanessa said: "It was a pleasure to highlight the positive work being done by volunteers across so many different organisations. We've already booked the date for next year's service and look forward to it growing and developing in future years. So, put Thursday 5 July,

2025 at 2pm into your diaries!"

Cathedral volunteer Freda Anderson says: "I really enjoyed the service. It was an inspiration to me as a volunteer both in the Cathedral and as a mental support worker in the community where I live. I feel blessed that my contributions are recognised, valued and appreciated."

Following speeches and uplifting hymns, attendees enjoyed networking over coffee and delicious homemade cake.

For more information about volunteering opportunities at Newcastle Cathedral, please visit [newcastlecathedral.org.uk/volunteer](https://newcastlecathedral.org.uk/volunteer).



# Bishop of Newcastle welcomes Cathedral's

**The Reverend Dr Kelly Brown Douglas, currently Interim President of Episcopal Divinity School in New York, has agreed to become Newcastle Cathedral's first Anglican Communion Canon.**

Dr Douglas is considered a leader in the field of womanist theology, racial reconciliation, social justice and sexuality and the Black church. In this honorary and non-residentiary role, she will contribute her extensive insight and experience to the Cathedral and Diocese over the next three years, both remotely from the US and during her visits to the UK.

Bishop Helen-Ann said: "I am delighted that the Reverend Dr Kelly Brown Douglas has accepted my invitation to be our first Anglican Communion Canon in Newcastle Cathedral. This new appointment is an important witness to our commitment as a Diocese to turn outwards in mission and grow younger and more diverse. We have long valued our Anglican Communion Links as a Diocese, and having a Canon that intentionally reminds us of the global Church of which we are a part is an inspiring and courageous sign of hope in all the joys and challenges we face as a Diocese.

"Dean Kelly brings considerable experience and theological insight, expertise and

research to this role and I am excited by the opportunities we will have as a Diocese to learn from her, and with her in all the engagement she will bring into our midst. I am deeply honoured that she has responded enthusiastically to this invitation and look forward with eager anticipation to all that lies ahead."

Dr Douglas said: "I am humbled by this invitation from Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley and Dean Lee Batson to join the Newcastle Community, with its rich history, as Anglican Communion Canon. I am looking forward to getting to know the community and excited for our work together as partners across our global communion in doing the work of the gospel."

Welcoming Dr Douglas' acceptance of the invitation, the Dean of Newcastle, the Very Reverend Lee Batson added: "We are delighted that Dean Kelly has agreed to serve in the new role of Anglican Communion Canon. Part of the mission of any Cathedral is to remind all Christians that they are part of a bigger family than they find in the local church.

"Our particular calling as Newcastle Cathedral is to be one of the ways God enables a future, both better and more just than the past. Dean Kelly has regularly invited those who hear her to expand their moral imagination to start to believe in, and work for, this kind of future. Bringing her experience of the

Church in the US as a black woman theologian will be a huge gift to us and enable these wider bonds with others to be felt more widely and our imagination expanded accordingly."

Dr Douglas is currently Interim President of the Episcopal Divinity School in New York having previously been Dean and Professor of Theology. She also serves as the Canon Theologian at the Washington National Cathedral in the US and has held the post as Theologian in Residence at Trinity Church Wall Street.

She is the author of six books, including Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective, Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God, and Resurrection Hope: A Future Where Black Lives Matter, which won the 2023 Grawemeyer Award in Religion.

A native of Dayton, Ohio, Dr Douglas was one of the first ten Black women to be ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church. She was ordained as an Episcopal priest in 1983.

It is anticipated that Dr Douglas will be installed as a non-residentiary Canon at Newcastle Cathedral during her next visit to the UK. Further details will be announced in due course.

## A warm welcome to Ruth and Zoe

Two other key appointments have been made at Newcastle Cathedral.

The Revd Ruth Hulse was installed at Evensong on Saturday 13 July, having been appointed as Residentiary Canon for Worship and Congregational Life at the Cathedral.

Ruth joins having served as Team Rector of the West Hereford Team Ministry for the past 11 years, and as a non-residentiary canon at Hereford Cathedral.

Ruth said: "The core values at Newcastle Cathedral of radical welcome, inspiring worship and empowering worth reflect, for me, how Jesus lived, what he taught, and the hope he brings. I look forward to sharing these values with the Cathedral community as we join in with what God is already doing, and as we live out our faith together".

The Revd Zoe Hemming has been appointed as Residentiary Canon for Mission at the Cathedral.

Zoe will be installed at Evensong on Saturday 14 September, having served as the Vicar of St Andrew's Church, Aston, and as the Enabling All Advisor (Disability Lead) for the Diocese of Lichfield.

Zoe said: "I am so looking forward to being part of the boldly inclusive mission and ministry of Newcastle Cathedral through the many ways their 'Radical Welcome' is offered to all people of this vibrant city and Diocese."



# first Anglican Communion Canon



The Reverend Dr  
Kelly Brown Douglas

## Growing younger at the Resource Church

A thriving church in Newcastle is making huge strides with the diocesan commitment to growing younger.

St Thomas' was launched as a Resource Church five years ago with a focus on mission and ministry, revitalising existing church communities and planting new ones.

The church is becoming increasingly popular with young adults, students and youths, as well as children and families in the city.

Pentecost Sunday (19 May) at St Thomas' was a special day, with two baptisms at the morning service, and three more in the evening service. Bishop Mark attended in the evening and made 26 confirmations and also presided over communion.

Creative Director Luke Porter said: "We saw a significant hunger for God's presence and freedom in worship."

Church Leader Ben Doolan said: "God is doing an extraordinary thing at the moment with Generation Z.

"The testimonies of the young adults coming to faith are extraordinary and it's happening every week! The hunger for God in this generation is humbling."

Amy, who was confirmed in the service said:

"Being confirmed has been a significant part of my faith journey, it felt like such a personal way to confirm the faith I have in Jesus and the place I have in his kingdom. The evening felt like the perfect time and place to make an outward expression of my faith, and it reminded me that He is a God who knows me so well, a God who has been carrying me, and a God that will never let me go!"

Ben has recently graduated with a doctorate of ministry degree, having researched Church Planting in Post Christendom Europe.

He explained: "It focuses on best practices for planting churches that reach young adults. Hopefully this will be a blessing to the Diocese as we seek to grow younger and more diverse."



There were 26 confirmations at St Thomas' on Pentecost Sunday



# Celebrating women's ministry in

**T**here was a special service at Newcastle Cathedral this summer to celebrate women's ministry in our diocese, both past and present.

The Revd Alison Hardy, the Revd Dr Sarah Hills, the Revd Sue McCormack, and the Revd Louise Taylor-Kenyon were installed as non-residentiary Canons of Newcastle Cathedral by Bishop Helen-Ann before being led to their new stalls by the Very Revd Lee Batson, Dean of Newcastle.

During the service, on 23 June, the Revd Dr Sarah Moon, Priest in Charge of Killingworth St. John, was commissioned as Bishop's Advisor for Women's Ministry.

The special service also marked 30 years since the first women were ordained as priests in the Church of England, so it was wonderful to welcome four of the original 1994 ordinands.

Among the trailblazers ordained in Newcastle was the Revd Joan Dotchin, then a curate at St Gabriel's Church, Heaton. She recalled: "The day itself was so memorable. We knew we were making history and were told that there may be protests – but they didn't materialise."

Another of the original 1994 ordinands was the Venerable Dr Audrey Elkington who served in Newcastle Diocese in various parish-



es, as Bishop's Chaplain and also as Director of Ordinands, before being appointed Archdeacon of Bodmin in the Diocese of Truro in 2011.

"It was a very special day," recalled Audrey, who retired in 2021. "I was aware of how significant it was, but it was also so sensitive at that time."

"If someone had said that 30 years later, Newcastle Diocese would be served by its second female Bishop and two female Archdeacons, I

really would not have believed it. Things really have moved on in the past three decades." Bishop Helen-Ann was installed in April last year, succeeding The Rt Revd Christine Hardman. This made Newcastle the first Diocese in the Church of England with two consecutive diocesan bishops who were women.

The Bishop said: "This was an opportunity as a whole diocese to acknowledge this significant milestone: the 30th anniversary of the ordination of priests who are women. We rejoice with those who were ordained in 1994 and who have been ordained since that time and remember the 1994 cohort's great courage in being the first to be ordained as priests. Theirs was an ordination with great scrutiny, and while it was a time of rejoicing, I am aware that many were told not to celebrate too much due to a perception of sensitivity at the time."

"Whilst I am very pleased indeed to celebrate this anniversary, the reality is that work still remains to be done to enable the full acceptance and equality of women in ministry and to acknowledge the, at times, disproportionate load that women experience. We stay alert to this, but today is a day for much rejoicing, and I am delighted to have been able to welcome everyone to the Cathedral. Thanks be to God!"





# our diocese



Our four new Canons the Revd Alison Hardy, the Revd Dr Sarah Hills, the Revd Sue McCormack, and the Revd Louise Taylor-Kenyon



The Revd Alison Hardy



The Revd Sue McCormack



# Deanery Planning Celebration Service at Newcastle Cathedral

There was a special service at Newcastle Cathedral in June to celebrate the work of Deanery Development Groups in our Diocese. Here, the Revd Dr Ric Whaite, Diocesan Director of Mission & Ministry and Canon of Newcastle Cathedral, reflects on how it fitted into the wider picture this summer.

**W**e are in the part of the year where we notice the growth and flourishing of the landscape around us. We also sometimes notice what is changing in our views. This time is often characterised by visible “greening”, followed by flowering and (eventually) fruitfulness. The timely arrival of growth we might have laboured for in our gardens, farms, greenhouses and window boxes is a prompt to reflect on the outcomes we hoped for but also that growth which took place without the same kinds of deliberate care, planning and cultivation. Our lives are full of different spaces for reflecting on faith in planned and other-than-planned circumstances. We have placed our trust in a God who, like the Sower in the parable (Mark 4:1-20), sows generously and then goes on to reap and gather even in places that seemed not to have been sown.



Bishop Helen-Ann during the deanery celebration service

There have been some congruent threads appearing during the first few months I have been working alongside you with colleagues in Mission and Ministry. One begins to notice in the celebration of the work accomplished across Deanery Development Groups, and in the voices

from across the Province of York at the Salt and Light conference at The Sill early in June, the desire to attend to the places where glimpses of this generous divine economy are beginning to show, as well as hope attending to circumstances where God's seed is one of resistance against prevailing narratives of scarcity and competition.

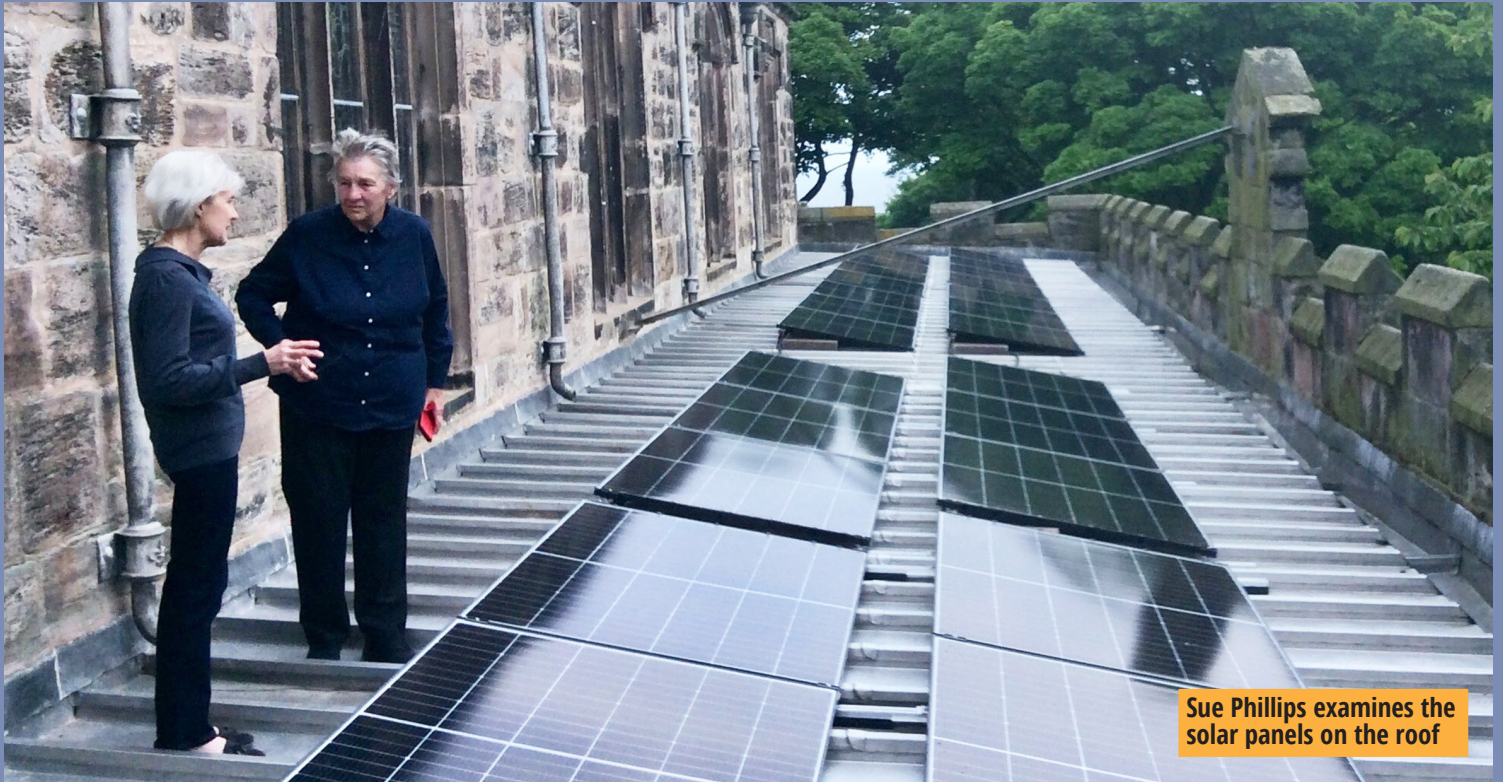
The season, the gatherings and the circumstances of our world conspire - a word that literally translates as “breath together” - and invite us not to reproduce a dour realism but look for resources that might help us become more imaginative in our faithful following of Jesus. The clergy of the Diocese will reflect on this theme of imagination with the guidance of Paula Gooder, Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral, London, at the clergy retreat in July. This seems like the next thread to gather in to our story as we move towards the commencement of our “season of seeking” during 2024-25: to discern how and where God is working among us within our vision of Seeking, Sharing, Sending.





## Environment

# Eco focus leads to solar panels at 375-year-old church



Sue Phillips examines the solar panels on the roof

St Paul encouraged the Corinthians never to lose heart – but that’s quite a challenge when modern solar panels and a Grade 1 listed church are involved.

Yet Holy Trinity and St Mary’s Church at Berwick-upon Tweed ploughed on – and now almost three years after their ambitious project began, the panels were installed on the southside roof in May 2024.

Project co-ordinator Susan Phillips and the team never lost heart, overcoming many obstacles. And as St Paul wrote to the Romans, all things did eventually conspire to the good!

It’s quite a landmark for this distinguished 375-year-old church, with some of its historical features assisting the process.

Thanks to the Cromwellian parapet around the roof, the solar panels are hidden from view even from the nearby town walls. The system is ballasted on the modern steel alloy roof-covering ensuring no impact on the 16th century beams beneath, while

cabling descends the bell tower to the batteries housed in an attractive fire safe cupboard.

Using the latest technology, the solar cells generate electricity even when the sun doesn’t shine, a distinct advantage in north Northumberland!

The panels are estimated to reduce the carbon emissions by the equivalent of 6,897 car miles per annum; the financial benefits too are significant, reducing current electricity bills and making money through feedback into the grid.

Taking seriously the 5th Mark of Christian Mission, Holy Trinity’s 10-strong eco group, led by environmental champion Anne Horne, has worked for several years to reduce the carbon footprint of the church with energy saving measures.

The solar panel installation is the most recent step towards becoming carbon neutral and is the legacy of the Revd Canon Dennis Handley, who retired from Holy Trinity last year.

The project was made possible by grants from the CoRE Legacy Fund, Garfield Weston Foundation and Benefact Trust, and through the generosity of the congregation and wider community who supported a variety of fundraising events.

The technical complexity needed for the project involved a number of different teams as Susan explained: “The expertise of the PCC, the support of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) and constructive advice from the Church Buildings Council was invaluable.”

Holy Trinity’s eco group runs its carbon neutral strategy alongside churchyard biodiversity work, which has involved areas of regeneration planting, bee hives, a bird feeding and watering station, boxes for small birds, owls and bats, a log cycle rack and beautiful rustic seating.

The churchyard, like the church, is enjoyed by parishioners and visitors from near and far.



# Education: A year of great collaboration and

**C**hurch schools have excelled in what has been a successful year for education in Newcastle Diocese. Interim Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) Gill Booth has praised staff and pupils for their hard work, as well as parents and families for their unwavering support.

This academic year has seen 13 SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspections across both Newcastle and Durham dioceses, with a 100 percent pass rate.

It has also been a year of collaboration, with school representatives joining together for various courses and conferences. These included the Early Years Conference in February and the annual Education Conference in June.

Both events took place at the Delta Marriot, Gateshead, with speakers including Bishop Helen-Ann and Bishop Mark, as well as education professionals from within the Joint Education Team (JET) and from partner organisations.

Specialist courses have been made available in various categories, including: Religious Education (RE), Spirituality, Christian Vision, Headteachers, Governors, and School Subject Leaders. The new diocesan RE syllabus was also launched with great success across all voluntary-aided schools.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a top priority for the JET team and feedback from the courses has been very positive with surveys gathered in order to build on good practice. School leaders have found



Pupils at nine rural Northumberland schools have been focusing on climate change during an initiative based on God's creation.

Led by church volunteers, the Fragile Earth Schools Programme has involved a wide range of fun and educational activities.

The initiative began last autumn when its leaders, all church volunteers, visited each school for a day to hear stories about 'Our Fragile Earth', based on climate change and adapted from Peter Privett's 'Living in a Fragile World.'

That served as preparation for each school



## Children get creative to show they care about God's creation

to spend a day (separately) at Simonburn Village Hall and neighbouring St Mungo's Church in June, where they took part in a church trail and a creation-themed scavenger hunt.

One of the volunteer organisers, Judith Sadler, said: "The activities reminded the children that all of us, no matter who we are, belong to the Circle of Life, as children of

God - that we are all connected and part of the universe as it is part of us."

An innovation this year has been the 'Cloth of Hopes and Dreams'. Pupils were asked to design a patch with their hopes for the planet or an aspect of creation that they love, before the designs were taken away and embroidered onto a special cloth for each school, by local 'broderers'.



# achievement in our church schools

these courses both inspirational and informative.

One commented: "The content delivery was clear, concise, and worked through aims systematically. I feel confident to deliver the aims of the new syllabus - any areas I'm not confident about I know I will be able to contact the Diocese for support."

This has also been a year of change for the JET team. Gill took over as interim DDE last September from Paul Rikeard, following his move to become Chief Executive Officer

(CEO) of the Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust.

This month, Eileen Bell, is retiring after 16 years as Bursar, while Jo Warner, Assistant Director, is also moving on in the summer. The JET team is pleased to announce the arrival of James Lewis who will take up the role of Assistant Director of Education from September.

Gill said: "Our schools have achieved so much over the past year with all they do for our hardworking children and supportive fami-

lies, and we are really proud of all they do.

"I said from the outset that my hope and aspiration was that all children, staff and governors can live life in all its fullness (John 10:10) through collaboration with one another.

"This has been prominent over the past year with all we have achieved together. We will continue to support our schools as they live out their Christian vision, to maintain the highest of standards and to overcome any challenges they may face."



Judith Sadler (in green) with some of the children and parents

Pictures: Andrew Davison

One of the cloths may even be used as an altar frontal at a church in the area.

Other activities included making circle of life bracelets, windmills and a tower of prayer, as well as writing good news stories

about the environment for school newspapers.

Judith said the support from the community for the project had been wonderful, and expressed her thanks and appreciation to all involved in making it a success.

Schools taking part were: Kielder Primary, Greenhaugh Primary, Otterburn Primary, Bellingham Primary, Bellingham Middle, Chollerton CofE First, Wark CofE First, Cambo First, Humshaugh CofE First.



# A warm welcome at the Bishop's



**B**ishop Helen-Ann hosted garden parties at the start of July – opening the gates of her picturesque garden at Bishop's House.

She extended a warm welcome to many people from both Diocesan and civic life, from across the city of Newcastle and



Keen runner Bishop-Helen Ann in the Grasmere 10K

## Bishop Helen-Ann

Territorio Trail Media, a Spanish media company that specialises in trail running, recently interviewed Bishop Helen-Ann after recognising her passion for running and avid following of both the Spine Race and Barkley Marathons.

It provided a unique opportunity for the Bishop to talk about the connections between running and our journey of faith to an overseas audience.

Here's an extract from the inspirational interview, which references Hadrian's



# garden parties

wider region.

There was a wonderful spread of food and live musicians, while great company was enjoyed by all, as Bishop Helen-Ann and her husband Myles delighted in the opportunity to socialise with those who attended.



## talks running and religion to Spanish media!

Wall and other parts of our diocese: "Personally, I see so much in the ultra (running) community that our churches can learn from and also be affirmed in through giving selflessly to one another and being a beacon of support and encouragement. My visit to the finish line of the Spine at Kirk Yetholm was one of the most affirming experiences I have had as a Bishop and has given me a lot to reflect on in the months ahead."

The interview has been translated into English and you can read it in full [atnewcastle.anglican.org/news](http://atnewcastle.anglican.org/news).



St Francis' Church Byrness offers refuge to competitors

Picture: Montane Spine Race



# Churchwardens are honoured for long service

**T**wo long-serving churchwardens have been honoured for their service to St Matthew's Church in Dinnington. Elsie Docherty and Thomas Laidler have both dedicated 14 years to the church, which is within the Parish of Christ the King.

Their dedication was acknowledged during the morning service on Sunday 2 June, when the Revd Mark Edwards MBE expressed his gratitude to Elsie and Thomas, who each received engraved crystal plaques.

Mark said: "Their service has been exemplary, often going beyond the call of duty. We owe them a debt of gratitude for their tireless service."

Elsie and Thomas are stepping down from their roles, but have both agreed to continue serving as deputy churchwardens, enabling them to maintain their commitment without the increased responsibilities which come with being legal churchwardens.

Mark added: "I am absolutely delighted that Tom and Elsie have graciously agreed to continue as deputy churchwardens. Their ongoing service will continue to benefit St Matthew's and the wider community."



The Revd Mark Edwards MBE, presenting Tom and Elsie with crystal plaques, inscribed in recognition of their service to St Matthew's Church and the Diocese of Newcastle

The vicar also raised awareness of a broader issue faced by the Church of England, with recent media reports claiming that almost a quarter of parishes are currently without churchwardens.

Nevertheless, the recognition of the service carried out by Elsie and Thomas reflects the deep appreciation of the St Matthew's congregation and underscores the importance of dedicated volunteers in sustaining the church's mission and community spirit.

## Special anniversary for our link diocese in Norway

Newcastle's link diocese of Møre in Norway is celebrating a significant milestone this summer.

It's 1,000 years since Christian laws were introduced in Norway back in 1024, when King Olav Haraldsson (St Olav) held an assembly at Møster and passed the laws, establishing Christianity in the Scandinavian country.

Congratulations to Møre, and Bishop Ingeborg, who is pictured visiting Newcastle Cathedral for Bishop Helen-Ann's Service of Inauguration in April 2023.

During the weekend of 1-2 June, the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, preached at the celebrations at Møster Old Church, which stands on an island off the west coast of Norway. The stone building dates



Bishop Ingeborg of Møre visited Newcastle Diocese last year for Bishop Helen-Ann's Service of Inauguration

to around 1100 and is thought to be the oldest village church in Norway.

Archbishop Stephen spoke of the importance of the continued links of mission and ministry with the Anglican Churches in Britain and elsewhere in Europe through the Porvoo Communion. The Communion,

established in 1992, comprises 15 Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Europe, sharing a full interchange of ministries.

Reflecting on the visit, Archbishop Stephen said: "It has been joyful to be joining the 1,000 year jubilee services at Møster as we cherish the bonds of our friendship and Christian fellowship where we are walking, working and praying together."

"Our most recent partnership of unity in our mission is the Porvoo Communion, which unites churches in their ministry in England, Ireland and the Iberian Peninsula as well as our brothers and sisters in Lutheran Churches in Nordic countries."

"We continue to learn from each other and grow in Christ's love."