

LNK

The newspaper for the Diocese of Newcastle



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St Thomas' is being transformed into a Resource Church Hub

Transforming St Thomas' Newcastle

EXCITING plans are underway at St Thomas' Newcastle as works begin on transforming the building into a Resource Church Hub for mission and ministry in the diocese.

The stunning church, which sits in the heart of Newcastle at Barras Bridge near Haymarket, is undergoing an extensive reordering project which will see its ground floor and first floor completely redeveloped.

In 2019, St Thomas' was launched as a Resource Church as a key part of the diocese's growing church bringing hope vision.

Led by Revd Ben Doolan and Lee Kirkby, St Thomas' is already making progress in resourcing mission and ministry around the diocese. Just in the last month it was announced that a team from St Thomas' will be moving to Byker to plant an Eden Team to support and complement the ministry of the Mission Initiative Newcastle East (MINE) churches.

St Thomas' has also hosted an online Alpha course in the past few weeks for nine

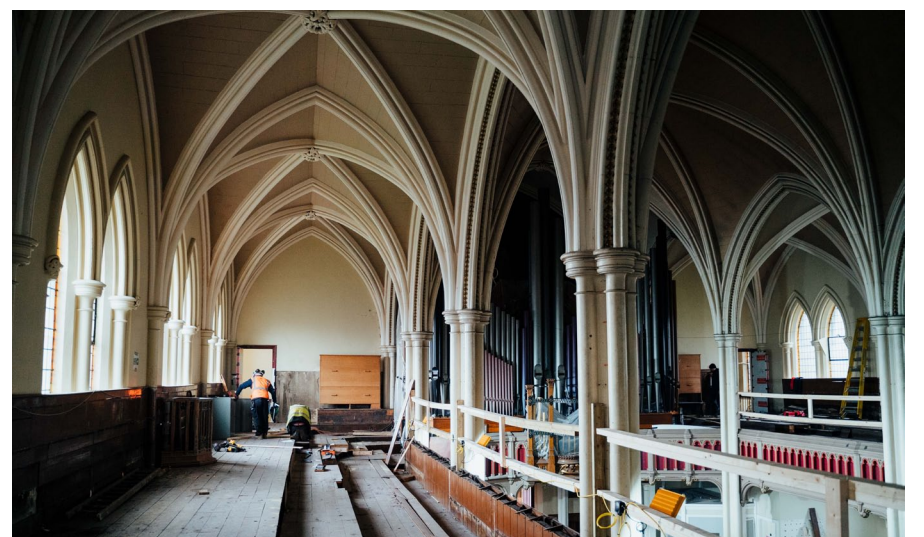
St Thomas'

churches in the diocese and a number of new people have made professions of faith and joined local churches as a result.

The building project will help catalyse more resourcing in the future.

Ben said: "The role of a Resource Church is to catalyse mission and ministry in Newcastle and the rest of the diocese and to join in with all the amazing things God is already doing. Since our launch we've seen our

Continued on page 3



Bishops' Diaries*April*

This is not a full list of the bishops' engagements but includes the items we think might be of particular interest to you. Under the present circumstances some appointments have had to be cancelled, and there is a possibility of further cancellations. Many appointments have been changed to virtual meetings.

Bishop of Newcastle

1st	Chrism Mass & Eucharist of the Last Supper, Cathedral
2nd	Good Friday Liturgy, Cathedral
4th	Easter Day Eucharist, Cathedral
12th	Northern Church Leaders
13th	Interviews Christ the King Team Ministry
14th	Bishop's Staff Meeting
15th	Meeting re Curacy Placements
19th	Meeting of Archbishops with Diocesan Bishops
20th	House of Bishops
21st	Meeting of Bishops Staff & Area Deans
22nd	Shortlisting - Archdeacon of Northumberland
23rd/24th	General Synod
26th	Yorkshire & North East Regional Meeting
27th	Church Commissioners Board of Governors
28th	Mission and Church Property Committee
	Ecclesiastical Law Society Trustees Meeting
29th	Interviews - Archdeacon of Northumberland

Bishop of Berwick

1st	Chrism Mass, Cathedral
4th	Easter Service St Andrew's, Newcastle
6th	Bishop of Newcastle
7th	Transformation
8th	Transformation
14th	Bishop's Staff Meeting
15th	Transformation
16th	Shortlisting for Curacy Placements for 2022
19th	Transformation
20th	Transformation
21st	Area Deans & Bishop's Staff; Together Newcastle Trustees
22nd	Transformation
26th	Yorkshire & North East Regional Bishops
27th	Transformation
28th	Transformation
29th	Transformation

Comings & Goings**Appointments**

The Revd Elaine Ryder, currently Assistant Curate (HfD), North Tyne & Redesdale Benefice, is going to be Assistant Curate (HfD) at Hexham Abbey with effect from 12 April 2021.

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Easter thought

By Canon Alan Hughes, Chaplain to The High Sheriff of Northumberland

AT Christmas, Christians celebrated that the fully human yet Divine Christ child entered the world through Mary, as one theologian put it 'as water passes through a channel'. Christians recite Mary's song regularly, we call it The Magnificat and it should be top of any Christian's desert island disc choice.

Mary speaks of her personal joy, she praises of God. The theotokos as she was called (God bearer) shows concern for others and the world, and she longs for a kingdom of God on earth that will challenge and overturn those powers of the world which act contrary to God's good will.

Martin Luther wrote that: "Mary sang it not for herself alone, but for all of us, to sing it after her."

Too often it's familiarity as part of our church services blunts our response after singing it, we move onto something else and miss the point of our reciting it, which is to offer to bring the words alive in our time.

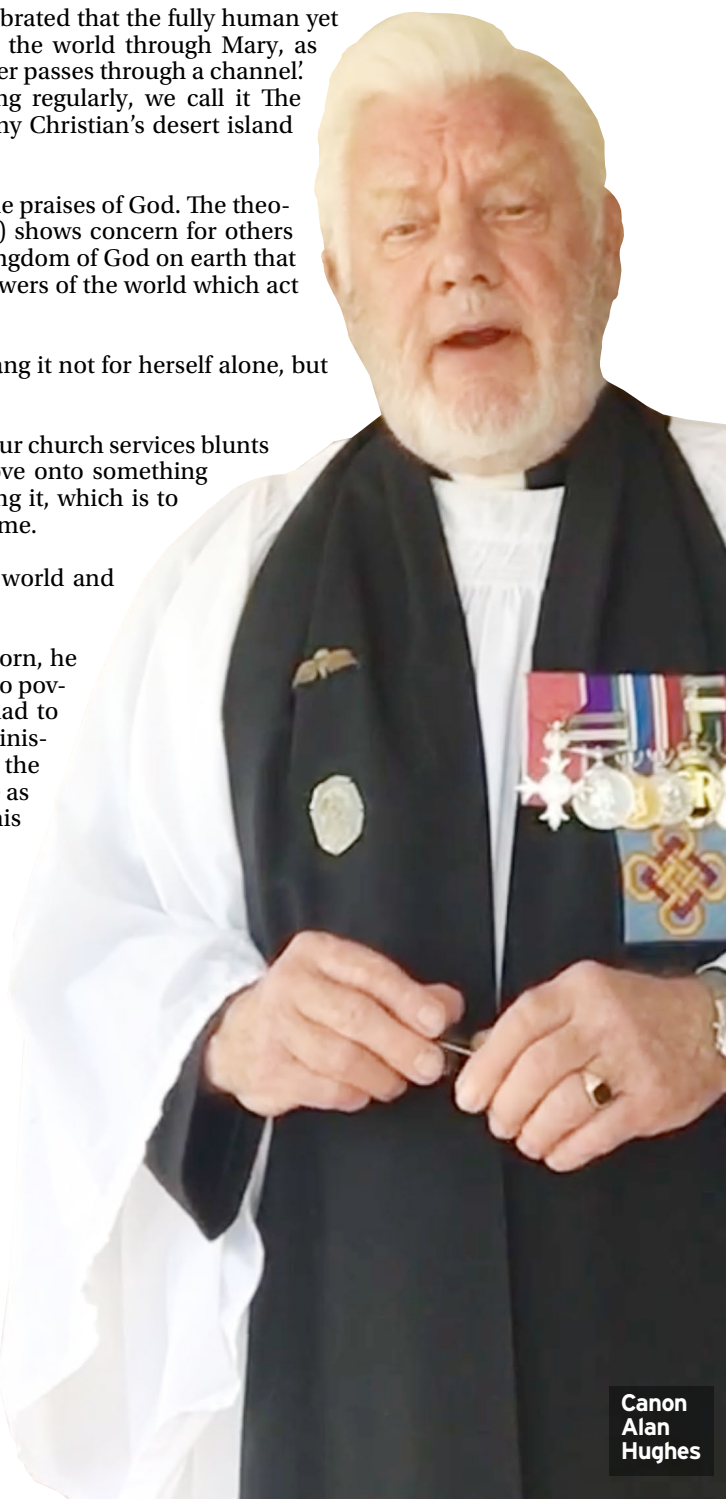
Once a baby is born, it enters the world and becomes subject to all sorts of risks.

And from the moment Jesus was born, he was in a place of risk. He was born into poverty, in a strange place. His family had to flee into exile for fear of his life. His ministry was with the marginalised and the outcasts. He was pilloried by the state as a dangerous radical, betrayed by his friends, and put to death.

Professor William Barclay wrote that: "There is loveliness in the Magnificat but in that loveliness there is dynamite. Christianity ought to bring about a revolution in individuals and revolution in the world."

Mary's song makes it clear to us: a world in which there is hunger and food banks and cities with vast wealth on one street and grinding poverty on the next - this is not the world of God's kingdom. God is on the side of the oppressed and the marginalised, the people with whom Jesus spent his time.

May God bless those giving substance to the words of the song of Mary, as we move into the season of Easter with its powerful message of new life for all.



Canon
Alan
Hughes

Gospel Readings

1st	John 13.1-17, 31b-35	16th	John 6.1-15
2nd	John 18.1-end of 19	17th	John 6.16-21
3rd	Matthew 27.57-end	18th	Luke 24.36b-48
	or John 19.38-end	19th	John 6.22-29
4th	John 20.1-18 or Mark 16.1-8	20th	John 6.30-35
5th	Matthew 28.8-15	21st	John 6.35-40
6th	John 20.11-18	22nd	John 6.44-51
7th	Luke 24.13-35	23rd	John 15.18-21
8th	Luke 24.35-48	24th	John 6.60-69
9th	John 21.1-14	25th	John 10.11-18
10th	Mark 16.9-15	26th	Mark 13.5-13
11th	John 20.19-end	27th	John 10.22-30
12th	John 3.1-8	28th	John 12.44-end
13th	John 3.7-15	29th	John 13.16-20
14th	John 3.16-21	30th	John 14.1-6
15th	John 3.31-end		

Diocesan Open Synod Forum 13 March 2021

ON Saturday 13 March, the diocese held an Open Synod via Zoom which anyone could join. Almost 200 people joined in from home. The theme of Synod was 'Growing Church Bringing Hope: Next Steps'. Synod opened with a reading from Isaiah 43:

"Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."
Isaiah 43.18-19

Bishop Christine began with an inspiring opening address explaining her sense of our Kairos moment as a diocese arising from these Bible verses and her own sense of where we are. Kairos is one of the Greek words for time. It means a critical or opportune moment. Bishop Christine reminded us that in order to make this most of this moment we need to do two things:

1. Recognise the Kairos moment and...
2. Respond to what God is calling us to do.

We are not being called to do more of the same with less resources, we are being called to do something new and different. Yes we are experiencing decline and challenge in some key areas but we also have new opportunities, including a new partnership between lay and ordained, and developing fruitful relationships between parishes.

Bishop Christine's words made us recognise that in our deanery (in our opinion) we have reached that Kairos moment and we need to respond in deep and new ways which we are currently doing

by working more closely and collaboratively, due to not only the pandemic, but also as there is a reduction in paid clergy.

The Bishop reminded us that one of the most common instructions in the Bible is 'Do not be afraid' (Isaiah 43.1), and sometimes we need to take a leap of faith and follow a new path and remember this instruction as we go.

The Revd Canon Rob Saner-Haigh, (Director of Mission and Ministry) followed Bishop Christine's address by asking: how do we respond? And, how is the Holy Spirit leading us? He talked about our values and priorities, building new partnerships, new collaborations, and therefore enhancing the capacity for mission.

Our Values for 'Growing Church Bringing Hope: Next Steps' are:

- Open to God's transforming love;
- Generous with God's transforming gifts;
- Engaged in God's transforming work in the world.

We need to be open to God's transforming love - God meets us where we are, but doesn't leave us there, but he moves us in the right direction using our talents to bring about changes in the communities we serve, to bring the fragrance of God's transforming work into our own unique parts of the diocese.

Out of these values, Rob talked about three particular priorities, which are interlinked:

1. Bringing good news
2. Growing in Christ
3. Living faith fully

Rob gave the analogy of a hike to a top of a mountain, where there

are the most amazing views. He reminded us that the path can be tricky, but he encouraged us to look back as we climb so we can see how far we have come, as this is as equally as important as the summit view.

After that the Bishop of Berwick, Mark Wroe spoke about transformation, he gave us three things to contemplate in our break out chat rooms:

1. What makes you hopeful and why?
2. What challenges do we face?
3. What makes us doubtful and how we can overcome these doubts?

Bishop Mark invited us to imagine new models for parish mission and ministry and explained what these models could look like:

Mission Parishes – the diocese is committed to parishes, but we need to think about how we resource parish ministry. A group of parishes could work together to build capacity for mission and ministry with an Area Minister offering overall support and direction, and each local church would have a Local Minister, who may or may not be stipendiary or ordained. This would be an opportunity for people to come together based on values of generosity, openness and engagement, working in partnership, but not just to cover existing gaps, but to enable outward facing mission.

Mission Hubs – parish churches gathered around a central church hub which supports mission and ministry in each place. Therefore promoting a stronger mission team to support the other churches which would enable the

mission of the church outwards.

Resourcing Churches – parish churches which are able to support the planting of new congregations or mission initiatives into other parishes (for example, St. Thomas Newcastle which is supporting outreach in Byker in the east end of Newcastle).

There is a Core Team within the diocese (including Bishop Mark and Canon Rob) who are helping us develop new mission opportunities and discerning our Next Steps, and who will continue to gather and collate the thoughts and ideas from the Synod break out groups, and from other deanery and diocesan meetings as we move forward.

'The pandemic has been a time of extraordinary change, and we have had to rapidly change and adapt to the evolving situation. This last year has been a testament to just how resilient we are as humans and our ability to be flexible and creative in the face of uncertainty... working together we are stronger.'

The Synod ended with a really engaging video, set to music, prepared by our Environment Team. In the video different people from across our diocese showed us how our three priorities (bringing good news, growing in Christ, living faith fully) align with our work in responding to our climate crisis and reaching our eco-targets in the Church of England.

With thanks to Marie Ness and Jill Swaile from St Peter's, Falstone.

Watch a recording of the Open Synod Forum [here](#)



'Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb...' (John 20.1)

A lone woman. Walking in the dark. Towards a graveyard. It's a strange and forbidding start to a day that now marks the ultimate victory of life over death and love triumphing over evil.

I am struck by John's Gospel starting Easter Day with a lone woman walking in the dark. As the father of three daughters I am very aware that much has been made of late about the ability of women to walk safely in our streets in the dark. This has sparked debate on some of the evils and inequalities in our society which we still need to confront and highlights the changes we want to see. As Mary walked in the dark, she walked towards the dawn and would soon face the risen son and the possibility of everything changing. Resurrection speaks about a redeemed creation, a transformed society and the renewal of hearts and minds. Easter is nothing less than this. Are we ready to walk Mary's path?

I am struck by the first witnesses to resurrection. They are the women who loved and cared for Jesus. I am inspired by God entrusting the good news of his risen son to those who at that time would not have been immediately respected or believed. Sometimes it can seem even 2,000 years later, in our ever so modern 21st century the same respect and belief are still lacking. Yet Mary remains the first to recognise the risen Christ through her tears. Resurrection shows us the possibility of a redeemed creation, a transformed society and the renewal of hearts and minds. Easter is nothing less than this. Are we ready to believe Mary's story?

I am struck that the good news of new life and hope is discovered in a graveyard at a graveside, and it's proclaimed from an unlocked tomb. The place of death comes to life. This feels so important as we look back on a year of global pandemic and the huge loss of life, as well as the incalculable cost to life, freedom and wellbeing. We read about disciples who even after hearing Mary's news remain locked down, but then are suddenly met by Jesus who can't be locked down, even by death. Even with scars on his hands and feet, Jesus embodies a redeemed creation, a transformed society and the renewal of hearts and minds. Easter is nothing less than this. Are we ready to meet Mary's risen Christ?

Whether alone, feeling in the dark, or experiencing loss, we are invited to walk with Mary in these strange and sometimes forbidding times. I hope like this extraordinary, courageous, faithful, witnessing woman, we can walk together towards the dawn of Easter Day.

This Easter may we know hope rekindled, life reborn and joy resounding!

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

+ Mark

Continued from page 1

church family quickly grow here at St Thomas' and it has been a huge privilege to support other churches in the diocese. The building project will further enable us to do this - to grow church and bring hope!"

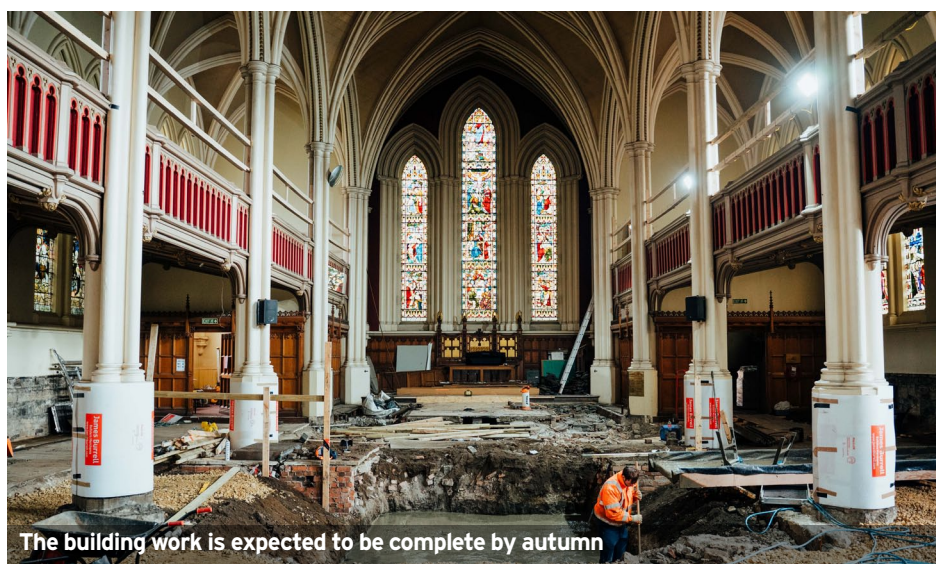
Plans for the ground floor include the creation of space for 400 movable seats, a feature baptistry allowing for full immersion, a glass screen under the organ gallery offering an open view from the street into the church, a kiosk serving drinks and snacks in a new welcome area, two new meeting areas, as well as a lift, a new kitchen and toilet facilities, all of which will be accessible.

On the first floor, a multi-purpose room will be created for various activities to take place such as children and young people's groups, conferencing and teaching, a large open-plan space will run across the first floor to the balcony level, and each of the five arches overlooking the mezzanine level will be glazed.

The current shop at St Thomas' is to remain in the same place but will undergo complete renovation to offer flexibility within the space.

Built in the late 1820s by celebrated architect John Dobson, the building has undergone extensive work in the past including the installation of additional pews during the Victorian period.

Doonan Architects, the company behind the new plans for St Thomas', have taken a careful and considered approach, with many of the design features paying homage to how the building was originally imagined by John Dobson.



The building work is expected to be complete by autumn

Ben added: "At the heart of John Dobson's original vision for St Thomas' was for it to be at the centre of the community. This very much remains at the heart of our vision today.

"The building project will enable growth in the city centre through sharing the good news of Jesus, being a hub for social action and will be a hub for leadership development, church planting and mission for the diocese."

It is hoped the works will be complete by Autumn 2021 with a relaunch planned shortly after.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, most services are currently being live-streamed, however

once lockdown restrictions are lifted St Hilda's Church in Jesmond will be the temporary home for St Thomas' services and meet-ups.

To see the progress of the building work at St Thomas', visit its website or follow the church on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Please join us in praying for the building works and for St Thomas'. We look forward to seeing you at the re-launch.

To see the progress of the building work at St Thomas', visit its [website](#) or follow the church on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Diocese and Christian Aid join together in Covid vaccine fundraising campaign

Giving thanks for vaccines after our Covid jabs

THE Diocese of Newcastle has partnered with Christian Aid to give people an opportunity to give thanks for their Covid-19 vaccine and help others in crisis across the world.



Recognising the deep sense of relief and gratitude experienced by many people after being vaccinated, the two organisations have come together to enable people to pass the blessing on by making a donation to **Christian Aid's Coronavirus Appeal**.

Funds from the appeal are helping vulnerable communities around the world access soap, water, food and vital health information in the face of the pandemic.

Many communities around the world face an uncertain wait for a vaccine as questions remain around the cost and timing of a global vaccine programme.

The Bishop of Berwick, the Right Revd Mark Wroe, said: "The Covid-19 vaccines are bringing a deep sense of relief and hope for all of us across the UK. As we celebrate our NHS and the vaccine roll-out, we also recognise that people want to express their gratitude by reaching out and bringing hope to others.

"While the pandemic affects all of us, it has highlighted the deep disparities in how communities and families are able to protect themselves both within our country and around the world.

"My hope is that people will be moved to give generously to the work of Christian Aid from a place of



Bishop Mark

thanksgiving and a desire to see all people living safely. Whether you can give just a few pounds or a much larger sum, it is a brilliant opportunity to love our neighbour by sharing hope with our sisters and brothers across the world who do not have the benefits we have."

Christian Aid partners have so far directly helped over half a million people in 27 countries including distributing food packages to nearly 60,000 people struggling to feed their families after losing work during lockdown and the economic downturn.

Going forwards, Christian Aid will support vaccination programmes in communities by providing data on hard-to-reach populations to local health services and by working with trusted community figures to challenge misleading information about the virus and vaccination as well as any stigma faced by those who contract Covid-19.

Christian Aid's Head of Community Fundraising and Public Engagement Chine McDonald said: "The coronavirus pandemic has shown us that none of us are safe, until all of us are safe. It has been amazing to see the speed at which the vaccines have been rolled out in the UK – every jab in someone's arm brings



Ibrahim (pictured) was selected to receive cash from Christian Aid's Covid-19 'C19NALPER' project in Nigeria after an accident left him with limited work opportunities and reliant on constant support from family members. C19NALPER is supporting vulnerable households to access basic needs and protect them from the impact of lockdowns and strict containment measures.

us closer to the end of Covid-19.

"But the reality is that richer countries like ours are getting more access to vaccines, while the poorer countries in which Christian Aid works are left at the back of the queue. As a Christian organisation, we believe that every person is equal in the sight of God and worthy of living lives with dignity, equality and justice.

"We're delighted to work together with the Diocese of Newcastle to give people an opportunity to say thanks and help protect our global neighbours while the vaccine is out of reach."

The appeal launch comes after nearly two thirds of people in a UK poll agreed that a global Covid-19 vaccine programme should be created which does not prioritise richer countries over poorer ones.

Sixty-three per cent of respondents to the survey commissioned by Christian Aid said they wanted to see countries working together to create a global Covid-19 vaccine programme that would not prioritise developed countries over developing countries. Only 11 per cent disagreed.

■ You can donate to our appeal [here](#).

Prayer of thanksgiving

God of Hope, Sustainer of all life,

We give You thanks for the coronavirus vaccines, for the skill and wisdom of scientists, NHS staff and key workers.

By the power of Your Spirit, may we overflow with hope and joy as we see our friends, families and neighbours protected.

God of Justice, Protector of the vulnerable, may we be your well-washed hands and willing feet.

Move us to give and act, to challenge the injustices that anger You.

May we seek to protect all Your children, particularly those for whom the vaccine is out of reach.

With hope and trust we pray,

Amen

Give thanks for your vaccination!

Support our appeal for Christian Aid

CHRISTIAN Aid Week is now only just around the corner!

Of course, it will be a bit different from some years, so Christian Aid is offering lots of alternative options if you would like to get involved.

If you normally hold a house-to-house collection, you could consider a 'delivery only' option, or you or your church might like set up an e-Envelope to send to family, friends and neighbours.

Could you be sponsored to walk 100,000 steps in May, or perhaps you'd prefer to hold an online quiz night?

Christian Aid Week

10-16 May 2021

If you're planning to hold a Christian Aid Week Service or event – online or in-person – do ask us for a speaker!

Lots of ideas and resources, including safety information, are available on the [CA website](#) and we are always happy to hear from you on hello@christian-aid.org or 01925 573769.

Holy Week and Easter at Newcastle Cathedral



THE Dean of Newcastle and residentiary canons of Newcastle Cathedral wish you God's every blessing this Holy Week and Easter. All services will be available online on the cathedral's YouTube channel. Some services are available to attend in person but pre-booking is required: phone 0191 232 1939 or email Ellie.Robertson@newcastlecathedral.org.uk by Wednesday 31 March.

28 March (Palm Sunday)

10am Morning Service with Liturgy of the Palms (online only)
4pm Choral Evensong

29 March

8pm Compline with Holy Week reflection

30 March

8pm Compline with Holy Week reflection

31 March

8pm Compline with Holy Week reflection (online only)

1 April (Maundy Thursday)

11am Chrism Mass with Bishop Christine and a congregation of senior staff, area deans and lay chairs (online only)
7.30pm Eucharist of the Last Supper (limited congregation - booking essential)

2 April (Good Friday)

2pm Liturgy of the Cross with reflection from Bishop Christine (online only)

4 April (Easter Sunday)

10am Eucharist of Easter Day with Bishop Christine (limited congregation - booking essential)
4pm Festal Evensong for Easter Day (online only)

Newcastle Cathedral goes back to the future!

Can you help to create a unique and memorable time capsule for our cathedral?

AS part of the cathedral's National Lottery Heritage Fund project, Common Ground in Sacred Space, we have an exciting opportunity to help tell Geordies of the future about our city's past - from the last five minutes to the previous 2000 years.

What would you put in a time capsule for the Geordies of the future? What makes Geordies unique? What would you identify as Geordie? What memorable stories, images, events would you like to tell them about? Which buildings, objects, events, stories about the North East are important to you? Your ideas can be personal to you and your family, or it might be an important event that happened in North East history, an invention, a disaster or a triumph.



Newcastle Cathedral has been at the heart of the city of Newcastle for over 900 years. The cathedral wants to capture the spirit and diverse history of the city in this exciting time capsule project. But your help is needed!

Can you find or create something to put in the time capsule? For example, you could write a story, a poem, a blog, take pictures, make something, draw, make a film or record audio or maybe submit an object. The submission could be something created or original. The

list is endless. Be inventive with your memories and ideas. The time capsule is small, but your idea could be big.

If you make something we may only be able to bury an image of it. It just needs to be something that can be printed on paper or stored in digital format.

The most innovative ideas will be selected for inclusion in the time capsule which is due to be buried in spring 2021.

Places are limited and the competition closes in mid-April.

For more information about how to make a submission, visit Newcastle Cathedral's website [here](#).



NEWCASTLE
CATHEDRAL

View from the Lantern

With Kate Sussams, Director of Operations

WE ARE EXPANDING...

MANY people will think of us as one of the smaller cathedrals - both in size and in capacity.

and those who also engage with us online.

We've long been thinking of ourselves as under-capacity, even hard-done by, and sometimes looked on enviously at other cathedrals who seemingly had 'departments' of more than one and whole teams of people to perform tasks which we just absorbed along with everything else.

Clearly, with our new future beckoning and the end in sight of our building works, we've been thinking about what we would need in order to make the most of all the opportunities which will come our way.

The world of cathedrals has been wonderfully supported by the Church Commissioners who have rolled out a funding programme for cathedrals in the last few years called the Cathedrals Sustainability Fund (CSF) and last August we spent many hours putting together a funding bid for new staff posts; I am very pleased to say that we were successful.

We bid for three new posts - a Digital Marketing Officer, a Hospitality and Visitor Experience Co-ordinator and a Technical Verger.

We'd also bid the year before for a Fundraising and Development Officer and asked to carry this forward so we had a whole new team starting at once.

To have four new people seemed like a bit of a dream! We started recruitment for the Digital Marketing Officer as soon as we found out about the successful bid and we're so fortunate now to have Peter Cumiskey in this post. Peter was Marketing Assistant at Newcastle Castle then latterly Marketing Assistant at the Auckland Project at Auckland Castle. He's proving to be a huge asset to the team and this means extra capacity for the marketing team.

The Hospitality and Visitor Experience Co-ordinator will hold together the front-of-house welcome and presentation when we re-launch the cathedral, from setting up for events, overseeing volunteers and also making sure the retail space is stocked and working well; we have Amy Carrithers joining us at the start of April in this post.

The Fundraising and Development Officer will help us raise much-needed revenue income for us going forward; so important for our long-term future and to really make the most of much wider engagement with our visitors

Come the summer, the Technical Verger will be in place to be the specialist verger for all the audio-visual needs in events and services. Our project means a refreshed lighting scheme and a new audio system plus cameras for more live-streaming, so we'll need to increase our verger skills to be able to make this happen seamlessly.

Of course, all these new posts are underpinned by the permanent staff in the cathedral and we've got two new appointments coming up to fill existing gaps in our staffing.

We've been without a Head Verger for some time and during the past year with the various restrictions, this hasn't been too onerous. However, a Head Verger position is really important in any cathedral and we needed to make sure we got this important appointment right for our future. We're really fortunate to have appointed Paul Russell-Sewell, currently Deputy Head Verger at Sheffield Cathedral, who will start mid-April. He will be working closely with all our staff to support worship and events and activities and shaping his team to be more visitor-focused as well as looking after our magnificent building.

We've been thinking about how to have the office team supported and as our wonderful Cathedral Secretary, Ellie Robertson, will be retiring in August, we have decided to create a new post moving forward, Business Support Officer. This person will be supporting all the 'back office' function including marketing, ticketing, payroll, book-keeping, customer service, governance and carrying out all the administrative support one would expect from a busy organisation.

Crumbs - this means in the next few months we'll have six new colleagues on board. This is both exciting and a bit daunting. We're all going to have to work hard to make sure they are able to slot into the existing team whilst carrying out their new roles in what will initially be very strange times. Like all of us here now, our new colleagues will have to be passionate, committed and adaptable... and have a very good sense of humour!

We're so very grateful here at Newcastle Cathedral and we know our new colleagues will share our vision for what promises to be an amazing future.

Cathedral vacancy

NEWCASTLE Cathedral is currently recruiting a Fundraising and Development Officer.

The Fundraising and Development Officer will build considerably on existing engagement and work with the team to create compelling

fundraising messages to targeted audiences.

They will ensure that the culture of fundraising and 'making the ask' is embedded throughout the organisation, as well as creating long-lasting links with local

community groups, businesses and regional charities to deliver joined-up fundraising activities and development opportunities.

The full-time post is offered as a three-year fixed-term contract and will be subject to a six-month

probationary period.

The closing date for applications is Tuesday 6 April 2021.

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

CHILDREN at NCEA Warkworth C of E Primary School returned from lockdown to find a beloved outdoor education area 'deliberately destroyed'.

Staff at the school had been looking forward to getting their pupils back out to their 'forest school', as they focused on children's mental health and wellbeing after months of home-schooling.

But just a few weeks before classes resumed, they learnt the 'labour of love' collection of dens, seating and buildings, at a nearby farm, had been burnt down. Left scattered with broken glass and empty beer bottles, the area is now 'too dangerous' for children to use.

Headteacher Laura Ritson said: "Everyone is upset by the damage that has been caused to our forest school. Our den areas, fire pit, outdoor seating and building areas have all been destroyed. There is fire damage to the trees in the area and broken glass everywhere, it's really sad to see.

"The site has been a real labour of love for our pupils, staff and parents who have built it up over the past eight years and have wonderful memories of the time they spent there.

"The forest school is somewhere that all of our pupils go to learn practical skills, such as how to look after the environment, how to build from natural materials and how to cook on an open fire, but it's also a huge part of our mental health and wellbeing work, as pupils get to be hands-on with nature and have time out to be children, learning lifelong skills along the way."

After the school shared news of the destruction with parents on social

Pupils devastated after vandals destroy their forest school



Damage to the outdoor education area



Empty bottles of alcohol collected at the site

local community to help us with the clean-up operation on the site.

"Our school vision is to 'strive together as one' and with the support of our pupils, parents and the community, we hope that from the ashes, we can rebuild something even better for our children to enjoy as we head into the summer months."

Alan Hardie, chief executive of the Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust, which runs the primary school, added: "Opportunities to take part in outdoor activities, such as forest school, are vital for the wellbeing of our pupils, so it is devastating that it was deliberately destroyed.

"However, Warkworth is a school at the heart of its community, and the strength of the community spirit is demonstrated by the number of people who have already volunteered to help us rebuild."

media, the village community rallied round in support of the school.

As many as 50 businesses and individuals - including Bishop Christine - have already offered their services for

clean-up and rebuilding the site on the school grounds, where it will be more secure.

Meanwhile, over £2,700 has been raised after the school set up a Just-

Giving page to help fund the creation of a new forest school which is expected to cost £4,000.

Laura added: "We've been overwhelmed by the response from the

■ If you would like to donate to the school's JustGiving page, [click here](#).

However... the school is celebrating some very happy news! Church school scoops pioneering mental health award

NCEA Warkworth C of E Primary School has achieved the School Mental Health Award which is delivered by the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools.

It has become one of just five schools across the UK to be awarded a Gold standard for its outstanding mental health and wellbeing provision.

Warkworth Primary School provides a wide range of activities to boost the wellbeing of pupils and staff, including mindfulness clubs, yoga and relaxation activities, character education and regular 'pupil voice' surveys to assess the happiness of its pupils. The school has also built mental health and wellbeing awareness into its PSHE and RSE curriculum and has made mental health first aid training available to all staff to support them in their roles.

However, it was Warkworth Primary School's work to support not only its staff and pupils, but the local community too during lockdown that commended the school to the independent assessor from the Carnegie Centre of Excellence to receive the Gold standard award.

lockdown seemed to affect everybody's mental health and wellbeing in a big way," said Laura Ritson, Headteacher at NCEA Warkworth C of E Primary School.

"While our school remained open to vulnerable children and the children of key workers, the majority of our pupils reverted to remote learning. To help maintain a sense of 'togetherness' while we had to stay apart, we organised a community heart campaign where our children designed and delivered a series of paper hearts to residents for them to display in their windows. As part of Children's Mental Health Week in February, we then completed a 'walk to wellbeing' around the village to see how many of our hearts we could find.

"We also sent wellbeing bags containing activities and resources home with pupils to help support them and their families, as well as organised a series of live virtual wellbeing sessions to provide a safe space for pupils and their parents to discuss their thoughts and feelings during lockdown.



Pupils at Warkworth Primary School with their wellbeing bags

and pupils have achieved and to see their hard work

rewarded through the School Mental Health Award scheme is absolutely fantastic. Our vision now is to roll our wellbeing strategy out to other schools within the Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust to support their activities and ensure that our pupils feel supported as they progress through the academy."

In addition, Warkworth Primary School is keen to work with other schools to set up a national mental health and wellbeing group.

This group - comprising of both faith and



The community heart campaign

non-faith schools - will share best practice and support each other as they work towards the Mental Health Award

with Leeds Beckett University.

Laura added: "We are very keen to encourage other schools to participate in the award as it has been so beneficial to our pupils and parents. Setting up a dedicated mental health and wellbeing group will not only showcase best practice, but it will also provide an additional layer of support for schools who wish to attain the School Mental Health Award.

"We already have a couple of schools in Northumberland interested in joining the group and we would love to hear from others in the local area and beyond."

If any schools are interested in finding out more about the award and joining the group, please get in touch with Laura at laura.ritson@warkworth.ncea.org.uk

"The implementation of the third national

"I am extremely proud of what our staff

Heritage landmark and church awarded £316,000 grant



The Church of Our Lady was originally the private chapel for the Delaval family



The haha (a sunken wall in a ditch) will be restored

VITAL repairs to two historic structures within the grounds of the Church of Our Lady can now go ahead thanks to a large grant awarded by Historic England.

The grant of £316,000 will fund the repair of one of four corner bastions and the ha ha wall (a sunken wall in a ditch) around the churchyard of the Church of Our Lady, which is located in the grounds of Seaton Delaval Hall.

These structures form part of the early 18th-century boundary enclosing the pleasure grounds of the hall.

The Grade I-listed Church of Our Lady dates back to the early 12th century. For 700 years it served as the private chapel of the Delaval family but in 1891 it was given to the Church of England and has since served as the Delaval Parish church.

While most of the boundary wall, the three other bastions and surrounding parkland are owned by the National Trust, the bastion and ha ha next to the churchyard are owned by Delaval Parochial Church Council.

By rescuing the bastion from the risk of imminent collapse, the repair project work will open up the historic churchyard as a green space for public enjoyment. In addition, it will

allow the grounds of the Church of Our Lady and the rest of the Seaton Delaval landscape to be enjoyed together.

This work will complement the work already undertaken by the National Trust to conserve and protect the other three bastions and ha ha as part of its ongoing National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported project.

The repair project will help with Covid-19 recovery in the heritage sector, as the work will be carried out by specialist contractors and craftspeople.

The full cost of the project is £324,000 and is also being funded by Friends of the Church of Our Lady and a donation from Lord Hastings to the Delaval Parochial Church Council.

Revd David Bowler, Vicar of Delaval, said: "Many people have developed new skills and hobbies during Lockdown. I seem to have spent much of my time filling in grant applications and in conversation and meetings with some lovely people from the National Trust, Historic England, Northumberland County Council, Northumbria Historic Churches Trust, the Friends of Our Lady, Lord Hastings and many others.

"Thanks to the generosity of so many people the PCC has managed to complete one

scheme of work repairing the porch and door to our ancient, Grade I listed parish church and is now embarking on the repair of the Grade II* listed structure surrounding the graveyard.

"Sadly 14 self-seeded trees and a hedge had to be removed but we hope to replace these in more appropriate places in the churchyard.

"Once the work has been completed we can safely open up the church and churchyard to local schools, visitors to Seaton Delaval Hall and to local people so that they may enjoy the environment, the heritage and the spirituality of the place.

"On behalf of the church wardens and PCC I sincerely thank all who have had the vision, skill and the generosity to enable us to undertake these works and secure these important structures for future generations."

Trevor Mitchell, Regional Director, North East and Yorkshire Historic England, added: "During lockdown, we have rediscovered the value of our historic parks and gardens as places to exercise and lift our spirits. This repair project will do much to improve access to Seaton Delaval Park and Garden, providing clear mental and physical health benefits to visitors and locals."



The damaged bastion is in need of urgent repair

Sitting Among the Ashes

AN online conference on spiritual accompaniment in a time of climate grief and anxiety will take place in May.

Sitting Among the Ashes will be held on Wednesday 12 to Friday 14 May, from 10am-12.30pm.

Publicity for the conference states: "As we move forward, increasingly we will find ourselves accompanying those awaking to climate grief and anxiety. We and they will need to be learning to grow beyond the tyrannies of hope and despair: becoming keepers of a threshold to the future."

The main input over the days is curated by Paul Bodenham. Paul is a former chair of Green Christians and a convener of the Borrowed Time network which has grown out of Green Christians with the purpose of helping people to wrestle with climate grief.

What the conference is aiming to do:

- To help those involved in spiritual direction and pastoral care to be able to offer support to those awakening to 'climate grief' and anxiety and to those who are activists in climate change resistance efforts (like XR).

- To encourage ourselves to work through our own responses and feelings as well as to recognise the variety that may arise in others.

For more details and to sign up, contact andii.bowsher@northumbria.ac.uk

Digital Labs



ARE you responsible for the digital presence of your church?

In the last year, we've had to significantly change how we do 'church' and we've never been more reliant on technology.

Whether you're responsible for your church's website, social media accounts, e-newsletters or setting up online services, it can be a daunting world to navigate.

That's why the Church of England's digital team created **Digital Labs**. This is a hub of resources, news and events to support digital evangelism and discipleship in the Church of England.

Digital Labs offer expert blog posts, webinars and regular newsletters to help you make the most of your digital presence in your parish.

Latest **blog posts** cover 'What is an SSL certificate and does my website need one?', 'Repurposing video content from live or pre-recorded services', 'Understanding video views for online church services' and 'Does my church need to be on TikTok?'

Upcoming webinars include 'Video presentation skills', 'A Church Near You', 'Facebook pages for churches' and 'Instagram for beginners'.

To sign-up to the monthly Digital Labs email newsletter, filled with digital hints, tips and best practice, [click here](#).

Mothering Sunday

ALTHOUGH Mothering Sunday services had to be adapted in light of Covid restrictions, that didn't stop some wonderful celebrations taking place across the diocese.

St Peter's Church and the URC in Falstone could not host their usual Churches Together Mothering Sunday service this year – but instead offered bunches of daffodils to villagers.

The flowers were placed outside of the URC and were gratefully received by everyone who took them.

Jill Swaile, St Peter's Church Warden, said: "Churches Together in Falstone wanted everyone – not just the mothers of the village – to know they were thinking about them on this special day."

And St Francis High Heaton kindly offered gifts of simnel cake, flowers and lemon shortbread to its older and housebound church members.



Mothering Sunday daffodils in Falstone



St Francis Church handed out gifts to church members

Thy Kingdom Come launch

THY Kingdom Come 2021 has launched its virtual resources including the return of some very cheeky pandas.

During 11 days from Ascension to Pentecost – 13-23 May this year – the global prayer movement invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus.

The selection of new resources were unveiled in March, catering for ages from 5 to 105 years old, including:

- The Cheeky Pandas video series for children – The 11 part, fun-filled (15 min long each) programmes are packed with Bible stories, prayers, animation, worship songs and interviews with special guests including Adventurer, Bear Grylls, CBeebies Presenter Gemma Hunt, Revd Nicky Gumbel (HTB and Alpha) and Pastor Agu and Sola (Jesus House) to name a few. The video series (which will be available from early April onwards) can be used as part of church at home, gathered church (online and offline) and in school assemblies.

- Eleven youth video reflections – Thy Kingdom Come are working with the Archbishop of York's Youth Trust to produce a selection of youth resources including a series of video reflections from young influential Christians such as the current Methodist Youth President - Phoebe Parkin, rapper and author - Guvna B, Worship Leader- Elle Lime-



bear, Former Rugby Player - Jamie Jones-Buchanan and many more.

- Printed and digital versions of the Prayer Journal and Novena. This year's prayer journal was penned by the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell - crafted with the express intention of inspiring readers to re-encounter the love and joy found in Jesus Christ.

- A sneak peek of one of the main 11 videos for this year which will be shown between the Ascension and Pentecost period. The video featured Bishop Rose Hudson Wilkin. Other contributors this

year will include Archbishop Angaelos, frontline workers (hidden heroes of the pandemic) and many more.

The award-winning Thy Kingdom Come app was also mentioned, and for the first time, will include audio content from 24-7 Prayer's Lectio 365 with audio reflections from Pete Greig, Archbishop Justin and 24-7 Prayer GB UK Director, Carla Harding.

Whilst at the heart of Thy Kingdom Come remains the commitment to

prayer for evangelisation, the team are also adapting their offer - creating resources designed to refresh, encourage and inspire worshipping communities, families and individuals who may have struggled with the idea of 'Church at home'.

Recognising also the strain on churches to serve their congregations during the prolonged pandemic context, Thy Kingdom Come are giving away 100,000 copies of the Prayer Journal and Family Prayer Adventure Map

to UK churches as long as posting and packaging is covered.

For churches looking to be involved this year – a number of ideas were explored – covering all eventualities – whether at home or gathered worship once the restrictions are lifted in the UK.

[Click here](#) to watch the webinar in full. To order resources for your church, including free printed copies of the Prayer Journal and Prayer Adventure Map [click here](#).



Day of reflection

TUESDAY 23 March marked the first anniversary of the UK lockdown. Churches and individuals across our diocese joined together in support of the National Day of Reflection.

Organised by Marie Curie with support from many partners – including the Church of England – the national event gave people the opportunity to reflect on their collective loss, support those who have been bereaved, and hope for a brighter future.

Among the churches to mark the day was Gosforth Parish Church which was open as a space for private prayer, to light a candle and to spend some quiet time to reflect on the day. St Michael's Alnwick was also open for private prayer and reflection, with a short service of prayer held shortly before midday. St George's Jesmond paid tribute by tying ribbons in the grounds of its Memorial Garden and St Columba's Wideopen invited people to tie a ribbon on a display outside the church. St John's Killingworth planted a memorial tree near George Stephenson High School and people were invited to tie a ribbon around it.

Many churches – including St Thomas' Newcastle – tolled their bells at the end of a minute's silence which was held at midday to commemorate the tragic loss of life and to stand together with those who have been bereaved over the past year.

National Day of Reflection 23 March

A report published by the Church of England in the run-up to the anniversary revealed more than half of young adults have lost someone close to them over the past year, with this age group most active in helping to comfort the bereaved and organise funerals.

The research, commissioned by the Church of England, also showed that nearly three quarters of the 2,000 people surveyed – more than seven in 10 – who wanted to attend a funeral over the past year were unable to do so because of the pandemic.

The vast majority of mourners, 89 per cent, said that people had not been able to say goodbye properly to those who have died, while a similar proportion, 84 per cent, said that people had not been able to fulfil the funeral wishes of the person who died. Overall four in 10 people said they had lost someone close to them since March 2020 from any cause, including Covid-19.

The majority of those surveyed said they believed the Church of England should provide both outdoor and indoor spaces for quiet reflection and prayer for those coping with death, dying and grief.

Revd Jane Nattrass, Vicar of Gosforth Parish, said: "I want to give credit to the younger generation of adults. They have done a great service to families in helping them organise funerals, beautiful funerals. They've helped with tech to include as many people as possible; they've posted on social media to express sadness and gratitude.

"For some it was their parents, their grandparents, their brothers and their sisters. They've learned how to support in challenging times. In doing so they give us hope for the future."

Revd Canon Dr Sandra Millar, who heads the Church of England's work on funerals, said: "During this last year so many people have been unable to find comfort in their grief from being with others at a funeral or to hear a message of hope spoken.

"It has been particularly hard on many younger adults experiencing loss, perhaps for the first time, of grandparents and older relatives who may have been a key part of their lives. But our recent research also shows that under 30s are leading the way in reaching out to those who are bereaved with practical help and support."

Low carbon church webinars



TRAINING webinars about reducing the carbon emissions of our church buildings are being run by the Church of England.

To Replace or Not Replace?

Tuesday 27 April | 4-5pm & Tuesday 25 May | 6-7pm

This webinar will tell you what you should think about when deciding to replace your heating and lighting. What are the implications for your carbon footprint and the historic context of the church? Speaker: Susan Logan from EcoTeric.

The effective management of Church Lighting towards Net Zero

Tuesday 13 April | 12-1pm & Tuesday 11 May | 6-7pm

This webinar will cover church lighting - in all forms. The focus will be on how changes in the use of lighting can impact positively on the goal of becoming net zero carbon. Speaker: Bruce Kirk from Light Perceptions.

Choosing the Best Heating Solution for your church

Tuesday 20 April | 12-1pm & Tuesday 4 May 4-5pm

This webinar will include heat pumps, electric heating solutions, and more. What are the pros and cons, what is the carbon impact and what is the future of funding? What are the key questions to ask? How do we reduce demand in the first place by improving fabric? How do we make a persuasive case for change? Speaker: Susan Logan from EcoTeric.

For more information and to find out how to register, visit [here](#) and scroll down to 'Webinars on low carbon solutions – heating, lighting, solar and more'.

Voices of Faith: Everybody on the Planet

IN late February, members of the Voices of Faith group met online to hear three talks and to ask questions of the panellists on the topic 'Everybody on the Planet'.

Revd Mark Nash-Williams, Vicar of Alston Moor and Bishops' Advisor on the Environment, Mike Turner a humanist, and Bhaktirasa dasa from the ISKCON Hare Krishna Temple, each gave a five-minute talk on the issues facing our planet and our duties towards it.

The three panellists met online to respond to questions from group members. They covered questions on:

- Will God resolve Global warming?
- What we should be doing more of and less of over the next decade?
- What should be the short-term priorities for energy policy (nuclear, fossil, renewables)?
- Are vegetarianism and veganism the logical conclusions of the problem?

The three talks are at the start of [this video](#) and the panel discussion starts after 21 minutes. We hope you will find both the talks and discussions enriching.

Vacancy: Archdeacon of Northumberland

THE Diocese of Newcastle is seeking to appoint an Archdeacon of Northumberland.

The Bishop of Newcastle is seeking a colleague who will:

- Enjoy joining a committed, supportive, and friendly senior leadership team
- Be a wholehearted advocate and leader for the Diocesan vision and transformation strategy, and a tenacious supporter of parish

mission and ministry

- Have a lead role in developing a collaborative relationship between worshipping communities for mission and ministry in the city of Newcastle
- Oversee the Diocesan approach to, and work for, social justice
- Hold an overview of chaplaincy provision within the Diocese of Newcastle
- Be a Residentiary Canon at

Newcastle Cathedral

- Undertake the duties and statutory responsibilities of an archdeacon
- Have a unique opportunity to make a difference at a significant time of change and development
- Closing date for applications is Monday 12 April. For more information, [click here](#).

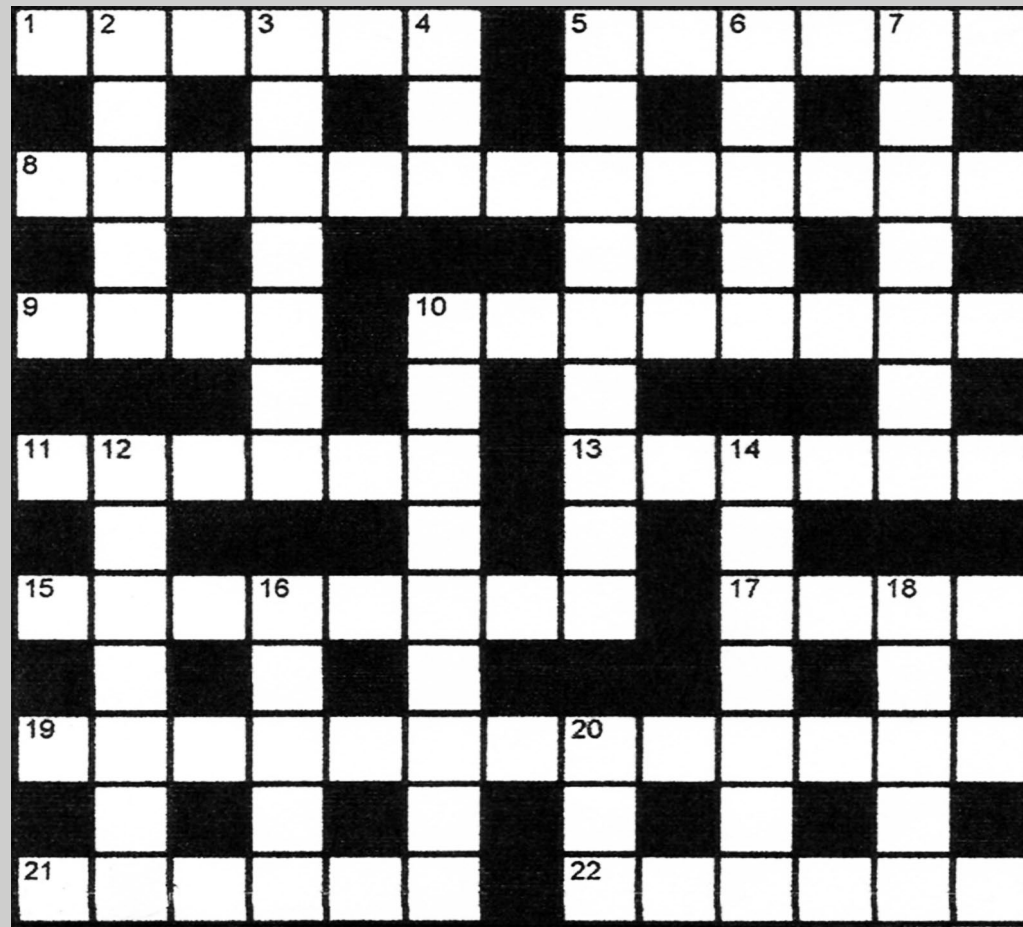
HAVE YOUR SAY

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: link@newcastle.anglican.org

**Link Crossword 171** *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**

1. Language used by the man with cup of tea (6)
5. Characteristic features of unconventional artist (6)
8. Have us destroy broadcast for Pancake Day (6,7)
9. Group of three initially touring Brazilian city (4)
10. Calling for action, possibly after five ring (8)
11. Average boy becoming clergyman (6)
13. Oriental missing the end of festival (6)
15. Brothers, British, misplaced her rent (8)
17. It's loaned for the pre-Easter season (4)
19. Try Andy in suit altered for a week after Pentecost (7,6)
21. Weapons in singer's first lyrics (6)
22. Smart doctor initially entering ship with youth leader (6)

DOWN

2. Anaesthetic used by vet here (5)
3. From Brazilian city to America, it's disorderly (7)
4. Great sadness revealed by two elders (3)
5. Somehow con hunter using cudgel (9)
6. A small group with something valuable (5)
7. Meal given to woman with plant (3,4)
10. Unruly, a set never worships (9)
12. Personnel manning a plane spilling raw rice (7)
14. Quietness since including the French (7)
16. Singer involved in rite normally (5)
18. New listeners making approaches (5)
20. Second commercial making us unhappy (3)

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD 170**ACROSS:**

1. Redeemer 5. Area
8. Dogma 9. Manager
11. Tight-fisted 13. Mildly
14. Averse 17. Self-centred
20. Impulse 21. Incur
22. Gang 23. Lethally

DOWN:

1. Rude 2. Digital
3. Evangelical 4. Enmity
6. Right 7. Abridged 10. Nail varnish
12. Smashing
15. Radical 16. Annexe
18. Lupin 19. Pray

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION

#LIVELENT reflections from the Church of England have invited us to 'pay attention to how you communicate with people. What difference does it make to try to apply those communication lessons [from the daily readings] from Jesus?'

'Communication' can mean anything to anyone at any time. 'Good' communication is even more difficult to pin down. Is it something written to be read or said to be heard? Something touched, tasted or smelled? Something experienced: a sense connection with someone; a shared understanding?

How did Jesus talk to and spend time with others who were outsiders, undesirable or even dangerous and to be avoided? How did he communicate in a way that had people flocking to be touched by him and be near him?

How could we be more able to be with those at the margins or at the limits of our compassion? Or, even those who we find irritating or demanding every day?!

If you could glimpse into the world of the other person, notice the things that are important to them, their hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, would you? It would change you. Would you do it?

Perceptual Positioning encourages us to notice how someone else experiences their world. We may not agree with their values as we perceive them or condone their attitudes or behaviours. However, if we are aware of what

Wellbeing

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



might be important to them, we have a first step toward reducing our own fear, anger or irritation by bringing the person into focus rather than experiencing them only as their behaviours.

We can re-imagine, re-experience and learn from an interaction with another person from three positions.

1. First position: This position is based on our experience of our world.

2. Second position: In this position as far as we can, we experience the world as the other person experiences it - the old 'walk a mile in their shoes' admonition.

3. Third position: A fly-on-the-wall observation of the way we interact with each other. How do we treat, speak to, and listen to each other?

Perceptual Positioning is a dance really. We move from first to second position, back to first, then to third and finally back to first position. Each time we return to our own position we

reflect on what we have learned from being in the other position and how this has changed us.

In first position we pay attention to the behaviours of the other person: what they do, what they say and to how they say it.

Now, moving into second position, we imagine what it is like for them to experience this conversation or situation. What emotions might they be feeling based on our observations of their behaviours. Which of their values, hopes and certainties might be being crushed? Experience a little of their world. As we do this, we suspend judgment. If we judge, we have decided their intention and have shut down our ability to experience their world in the way they do.

Next, returning to first position, we bring back the insights we have had and notice how these have changed our attitude toward the other person. Even a small shift is significant.

Moving into third position now, we take a fly-on-the-wall perspective and imagine how the next conversation with that person might go.

Finally, returning to first position, we bring back what we have learned from that imagined next interaction. How was that different from the previous encounter? How have we changed?

When we enter someone else's world, we emerge changed and more able to meet them where they are. Don't we?

For more information about the diocese's counselling provision, [click here.](#)

Count me in



STREET Zero, a partnership committed to ending rough sleeping in Newcastle, is asking churches to join its Count me in campaign.

The charity – of which Bishop Christine is patron – has been working tirelessly to eradicate rough sleeping in the city.

Street Zero's mission is to end rough sleeping for good in the city by 2022.

As of January 2021, there were 74 per cent fewer people rough sleep-

ing in the city compared to January 2020.

Street Zero Chairman Bob Eldridge, a member of St Andrew's Church, Corbridge, said: "Working together as a city, we have the opportunity to increase that figure to 100 per cent. Newcastle can be the first UK city to end rough sleeping for good."

The Count me in campaign is a single, simple ask to Newcastle residents, businesses and churches to pledge their name in support of ending rough sleeping in Newcastle

by next year.

Simply sign up on the [Street Zero website](#) and join the growing number of people who have already pledged to support this commitment.

More than 1,500 people have already put their names down and it is hoped that figure will exceed 5,000.

■ For more information, read [Street Zero's online newsletter here](#).

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 raising a three year old and riding a bike around Leamington Spa.



THE USUAL SUSPECTS

IN my first year of university (long enough ago now, that I don't think I can be accused of spoiler-ing anything much), I sat down to watch a film whilst my flatmates went out - they saw what I'd chosen and said, "you'll love it - there's a fantastic twist!" So, armed with this information and unconsciously primed with the memory of a character's name mentioned in a song I'd heard recently (Voodoo Roller, from Space's album, Spiders), the very first time I heard a doomed smuggler mention the mysterious name, 'Keyser Soze', I realised what the twist had to be. This didn't particularly spoil my viewing pleasure - it was fun watching the characters catch up with what I'd worked out, and the story was well told and still had one or two surprises along the way to the ending.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like this.

We find ourselves in the middle of a number of stories we kind-of know the ending of - we've either been told, read about or intuited how things are going to turn out - but, like with my viewing all those years ago, we don't know the details of how those endings are going to come about. Each of us is on a journey between birth and death and an eventual life on the new Earth when God has finished

redeeming all things. But, just as the life and work of Jesus didn't jump directly from his birth to the Passion, neither do we jump straight from birth to Glory. What happens in between matters.

The Bible tells us that, in the end, God is going to create a new Heaven and a new Earth and that there will be no more tears, sorrow, dying or death. But we're not there yet. We're stuck with the tears, sorrow, death and dying. We are called, in the midst of this, to work alongside God in the 'making new of all things' - starting where we are and enjoying discovering the details of how the story is progressing towards its end. Or at the very least, the end of the current volume.

Just as we find ourselves coming up towards the end of Lent, the story of Jesus' life and ministry nears its earthly climax in the story of his trial, execution and burial. We can see at least as far ahead as that. Beyond that lies the resurrection and the beginning of the next part of the story. The Bible tells us that the disciples forgot what Jesus had told them about his coming death and resurrection and were surprised to see him again, only then remembering what you imagine they should have borne in mind. Can we likewise, put to one side our knowledge of the twist of all twists and enter into the story we are being told and are helping to tell?



north east
Religious Resources
your religious learning resources centre

www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk

NEWS FROM THE RRC

WE ARE OPEN!

THE Religious Resources Centre has now reopened and we are welcoming members to browse, borrow and return resources from 10am-12.30pm and 1.30pm-5.30pm Monday to Friday.

We will still have social distancing measures in place and safety measures will be in place to protect you and our team. These include:

- Sanitising facilities at each site on entry and exit
- Social distancing – around the issue desk and the resource areas
- Protective PPE – staff will have masks and visors, all members and visitors are asked to wear a mask or visor in the RRC
- Restricted numbers at any one time which may lead to a small delay at some

times

- The temporary closure of study areas at both sites
- A quarantine period for all returned stock

We hope that there will be no further restrictions to our services but we will include details on our [website](#) if any are imposed.

EASTER CLOSURE

Although our doors were shut, staff have been working throughout the lockdown and are due staff training and some holiday!

In order to accommodate these with minimum disruption we will be closed for the Easter period from 5.30pm on Wednesday 31 March until 10am on Wednesday 14 April.

STREET ZERO **ENDING ROUGH SLEEPING IN NEWCASTLE** **2018-2022**

New TCS Project in the North East

The Children's Society

THE Children's Society (TCS) is delighted to announce a new project in Newcastle and Gateshead.

In mid-February TCS took over the delivery of the RISE Mental Health in Schools service across the regions.

Transferring from the Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust, the TCS team will be working with young people in schools – including church schools - across Newcastle and Gateshead to help support their emotional and mental wellbeing.

School is full of positive and negative experiences and can be especially difficult when people experience added pressures, whether school related, in their personal life, or in the aftermath of the pandemic.

The RISE team of 12 Educational Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPS) will support young people to manage emotional and mental wellbeing at an early stage which can help prevent problems becoming more serious.

The team will work on a one-to-one basis with young people, in group settings, and on a holistic level with the whole school.

As well as offering physical support the **RISE website** offers resources and guided self-help tools on a range of issues.

A spokesperson for TCS said: "We know young people have been hit hard by the pandemic and will be facing more challenges as they return to school, with potential impact on mental health and well-being as they adjust to the new normal. This continues to be a big area of focus for TCS work and over the last year we have produced a range of new resources to support young people and adults to navigate the challenges.

"These include the **Young People Guide to Stressful Situations**, the **Friendship Guide for Young People** and **Friendship Guide for Adults**, and **Trauma and Young People**. The charity also offers its **Church Youth Group resources** and guides for **How to Support Young Peoples Mental Health and Wellbeing**."

Currently in the early stages of delivery, the hope is to extend the reach of the project over the coming years. The project has been operating virtually and physically over the last year and plans to be fully back in schools as the return continues.



Prays, signs and leaves

The writer's name and address supplied to the editor

IT is a brave organisation which asks one of its fiercest critics to review their performance, yet that is what our Diocesan Safeguarding Team did, hence my writing this as a former 'poacher turned gamekeeper' after completing my recent Safeguarding Leadership Course.

We are all formed or conditioned by our past experiences, good and bad. I left school 60 years ago without any qualifications, the then education system not understanding my phobia for examinations. Hind legs could fall off a donkey when I spoke but put an exam paper in front of me and I would freeze.

As Winston Churchill wrote of his school days: "I seemed to have all the answers to the questions they were not asking." In 1961 I enrolled in the university of life and, by the grace of God, became one of its relatively successful perpetual students.

When I received an email inviting me to join an online Safeguarding Leadership Course, my first thought was that it had been sent to me in error. I have no leadership role, no position ordering the life of a congregation or church, simply a retired priest, willing to help vacant parishes.

When I began my assault on the safeguarding team I was instantly disarmed by Carol Butler during a conversation with her over video link. I explained that, when asked to cover say Saint Eucalyptus by the Sea, I would turn up to a congregation with its own safeguarding officer and protocols, lead a service of worship, enter the vestry briefly with a warden, sign the register and leave, one who sim-

ply prays, signs and leaves. Carol listened patiently then explained that everyone involved in any capacity in our churches, group leaders, wardens, lay readers and retired clergy to archbishops must complete the Safeguarding Leadership Course.

Having been fortunate to have Jack Russell terriers as companion animals I have grown like them, not least not letting go of a bone. So, I opened the attachments on the safeguarding team's email and began to pick away at them, trying to find fault to avoid taking part.

The paperwork was daunting at first, not least the reading list, until I realised that the experts were not simply demonstrating how well read they were but helpfully providing references to aid those who would want to delve deeper post-course.

On discovering a spelling error, I dropped to my knees in joy, thinking that it would be my get out of jail free card and so rang Carol. The only way to get pearls out of oysters is by the action of irritants and I must have been irritating to Carol, though she did not let on but calmly talked me through the process with her pearls of wisdom and so I signed up.

Suffice to say, come the evening of the first zoom I was a reluctant participant. However, on seeing the faces of my fellow course members, clergy and lay, some I have known for years, I felt not only resolved to be compliant but also relaxed.

This was also my first contact with Carol's colleague and co-host Mark Bagnall. I soon realised that the pre-session tasks were simply to help them discover our level of prior knowledge. The group discussions were so very helpful and soon everyone realised that the exercise was more about informing and ena-

bling rather than testing.

For some it has been cathartic, encouraging reflection on personal experiences. Not least me, reflecting on those times when the church had been less than supportive when I had concerns but learning that clergy are much more supported now and also more thought is given to their own wellbeing and protection from harm and bullying.

I highly recommend Carol and Mark and the team. Their course is well planned and run, and I hope that my story helps others overcome any hesitancy they may have. Don't just take my words for it, here are just three of the many feedback comments from participants:

"This course was conducted in two sessions on Zoom. I really enjoyed the interaction from the start. Having questions to think about beforehand to aid the discussions was very useful. It was good to use breakout rooms to facilitate the discussions. Having two 'leaders' gave a variety of voice and both were very supportive and valued everyone's input. It was good to have the course split into two sessions as it kept screen-time manageable. I wouldn't alter anything in the delivery of the course."

"I found the learning experience both enjoyable, encouraging and enlightening. There was a good balance of practical, pastoral and theoretical advice. I discovered a great deal that will find an immediate application in my ministry and much that will benefit the life of my parish. Thank you"

"Very thought provoking. It was good to be made to think about a holistic approach. The exercise in the second session raised many issues and made me think about looking at all sides rather than prejudging."