

LNK

The newspaper for the Diocese of Newcastle



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Left to right, Vicar Tom Birch, Jenny Bullock, Ovingham Middle School Head Teacher, and Doreen Jordan, Chair of Ovingham Parish Council

Church and community come together to help children's home-learning

THE communities of the united benefice of Ovingham and Wylam have funded 17 laptops for Ovingham Middle School in just 36 hours.

It started when the school approached Doreen Jordan, the chair of Ovingham Parish Council, for help funding a single laptop. With many children currently home-schooling, laptops are vital to allow pupils to connect with their teachers.

Doreen approached St Mary the

Virgin, Ovingham to ask if they would like to join in and help fund new laptops. From this first invitation, the initiative snowballed with the Parish Councils of both Wylam and Ovington agreeing to each fund a laptop, as did other community groups. Charitable church funds contributed another two and parishioners donated another 10.

The initial aim to fund one laptop was exceeded within 36 hours, with 17 being purchased.

Ovingham Middle School is part of the Tyne Community Learning Trust, a grouping of nine schools within the Ovingham and Prudhoe area. The laptops funded will be used throughout the trust for families with insufficient access to computers at home to enable effective online teaching. The effects of the community's generous response will be felt across the trust.

Reverend Tom Birch, Vicar of the united benefice, said: "I am delighted and astounded by the scale and speed

of the generosity shown by these communities. I know from my family experience of home-schooling the difference having extra laptops makes.

"Children should not be excluded from education because there is not a computer in their home or because that computer is also needed by parents trying to work from home at the same time. It is amazing what can be achieved by churches and other community groups working together to address real and pressing need."



Watch this video for more on the story:
<https://youtu.be/dtWKnWoHe-Q>

Bishops' Diaries

March

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	Joint Bishops Meeting with Durham Diocese, Northern Church Leaders Meeting, Readers' Meeting
3rd	Licensing Service, The Revd Fiona Sample
4th	Bishop's Staff meeting
5th	Lords Spiritual Meeting
10th	House of Bishops Standing Committee, Cathedral Council, Deanery Lent Group, Haydn Bridge
11th	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory panel
13th	Diocesan Synod (Forum)
16th	Bishop's Council
17th	St Hild & St Bede Trustees Meeting, House of Bishops Meeting
22nd	House of Lords Duty Week, 22nd to 26th March, Northern Church Leaders Meeting
23rd	Bishop's Council and Standing Committee
28th	Start of Holy Week
30th	St Andrew's Compline Service

Bishop of Berwick

1st	Joint Bishops Meeting with Durham Diocese, Northern Church Leaders Meeting
2nd	NECAT Trustees Meeting, Diocesan Counselling Provision
4th	Bishop's Staff meeting
7th	Preach at Scremerston, Spittal and Tweedmouth
9th	Tyneside Leaders Forum
13th	Diocesan Synod (Forum)
22nd	Northern Church Leaders Meeting
23rd	Bishop's Council and Standing Committee
28th	Start of Holy Week

Comings & Goings

Appointments

Revd Dr Benjamin Carter currently Incumbent of Haydon Bridge & Beltingham w Henshaw is going to be Canon Warden of Carlisle Cathedral, Diocese of Carlisle with effect from 25 April 2021.

Revd Dr Pauline Pearson, currently Team Vicar in the Christ the King Team Ministry, has been appointed Acting Team Rector within the Christ the King Team Ministry with effect from 1 January 2021.

Revd James Harvey, currently Priest in Charge of Felton & Longframlington with Brinkburn & Diocesan Development Officer for Youth Work in the North of the Diocese, is going to be Priest in Charge of St. Cuthbert & Holy Trinity Darlington in the Diocese of Durham with effect from 21 April, 2021.

Revd Dr Rachel Caro, currently Assistant Curate of Byker St. Martin within MINE, is going to be Priest in Charge of the Benefice of Shiremoor and Mission Enabler (New Estates) in the Tynemouth Deanery.

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For advertising rates and deadlines see www.newcastle.anglican.org/link.
Copy date for March 2021 issue: Monday 15 March.

Step Forward

AN event for young people considering ordained ministry in the Church of England will take place in March.

Step Forward will this year take place via Zoom on Saturday 13 March from 1-4pm.

The event, for people aged 18-30, will explore what it means to be called by God, what it means to be called to serve in the Church of England today and in the future, and

Step Forward

the range of different callings and ministries within God's Church.

Archbishop Stephen Cottrell will preach at the session and Diocesan Directors of Ordinands will be available afterwards to talk with those interested in the discernment process.

The event will feature time for worship, prayer and Bible study, an opportunity to find out what being ordained is really like, space to consider what God might be calling you to in the future, and the chance to discover how the selection process and ordination training programmes work.

For more information and to book (registration closes on 3 March), visit: www.stepforwardanglican.org.uk

Gospel Readings

1st	David, Bishop, patron of Wales, c.601 Luke 6.36-38	17th	Patrick, Bishop, Missionary, patron of Ireland c.460 John 5.17-30
2nd	Chad, Bishop, missionary, 672 Matthew 23.1-12	18th	Cyril, Bishop, teacher of the faith, 386 John 5.31-end
3rd	Wednesday Matthew 20.17-28	19th	Friday Matthew 1.18-end
4th	Thursday Luke 16.19-end	20th	Cuthbert, Bishop, Missionary, 687 John 7.40-52
5th	Friday Matthew 21.33-43, 45-46	21st	5th Sunday of Lent John 12.20-33
6th	Saturday Luke 15.1-3, 11-end	22nd	Monday John 8.1-11
7th	3rd Sunday of Lent John 2.13-22	23rd	Tuesday John 8.21-30
8th	Monday Luke 4.24-30	24th	Wednesday John 8.31-42
9th	Tuesday Matthew 18.21-end	25th	Thursday Luke 1.26-38
10th	Wednesday Matthew 5.17-19	26th	Friday John 10.31-end
11th	Thursday Luke 11.14-23	27th	Saturday John 11.45-end
12th	Friday Mark 12.28-34	28th	Palm Sunday Mark 11.1-11
13th	Saturday Luke 18.9-14	29th	Monday John 12.1-11
14th	4th Sunday of Lent John 3.14-21	30th	Tuesday John 12.20-36
15th	Monday John 4.43-end	31st	Wednesday John 13.21-32
16th	Tuesday John 5.1-3, 5-16		

CURRENT OPENING HOURS

AS a result of the national lockdown, the RRC has had to close each of its sites but staff are working from home on reduced hours to support our members in any way they can.

Our e-mail at enquiries@resourcescentreonline.co.uk will be



monitored every weekday.

All items currently on loan have been extended until April.

We are also continuing to run online events and training

programmes. See our social media and website: www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk/events-and-training/ for details

For further announcements from us regarding reopening please monitor your emails, our social media and website: www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk/covid-19/ or up-to-date information about any changes.



Bishop Christine features in ECL lecture series

BISHOP Christine is to give a lecture on the importance of ecclesiastical law in facilitating the mission of the Church.

Organised by the Ecclesiastical Law Society, this event is the third in its Northern Province Lecture series 2021.

The online lecture will take place over Zoom on 16 June from 5.30-7pm. It is open to members and non-members and is free of charge.

■ To book your place, visit bit.ly/2MBv6nH

Comfort and Joy (for life, not just for Christmas!)

The Christmas campaign extending well beyond Christmas

By Jacqueline Atkinson, Children and Families Missioner in Denton

CHRISTMAS seems like a long time ago now, and as we all know, it was not the usual Christmas for most people, as we were not able to gather as we usually would.

However, there was Comfort and Joy in Denton and Sugley Parishes as we took the Church of England's Christmas Reflections booklet out to ten of our house-bound residents.

Not only did we take the booklet, but some of our congregation members made crochet lap blankets/shawls to go with the wooden holding cross we gave to each resident and a message saying 'we hope you find comfort in your lap blanket and joy holding your cross, knowing that Jesus is with you today and always'.

It was a pure joy to see the look on the faces of the residents when they received their gifts, many of whom had not seen family for months. Responses were: "This is for me?", "thank you, it is so wonderful to know someone is thinking about me" and "this is beautiful".

One lady had broken her arm and was really struggling and she said to hold the cross in her hand would bring such comfort.

The response to this was so overwhelming that we realised Comfort and Joy is for life, not just for Christmas!

So we issued another request for homemade blankets, and we are now ready to deliver more to the residents in our parishes.

Not only have the residents been overjoyed to receive their Comfort and Joy bags, but those who have made the blankets have thoroughly enjoyed having something to do at this time of lockdown, especially knowing they are helping others in our community.

The Reverend Neil Heslop, Priest in Charge, said: "This simple idea has been a real blessing to many people in our communities this Christmas, and it is great that with everyone's support we can continue to show our care for our neighbours in this way."

"Glad tidings of Comfort and Joy is for life, not just for Christmas."



> The crochet blankets and wooden crosses come with a comforting message

Bishop's Letter

With Bishop Christine Hardman

THIS Lent, as with most of the ways in which we have marked the Church's year during the pandemic, is quite unlike those we have previously experienced. The notion of giving something up, such as chocolate or alcohol, when we have had to give up so much more over the last twelve months, seems to be of very little significance on our spiritual journey today.

The lockdown-enforced isolation we have experienced this last year has brought us face-to-face with ourselves, including the un-Christlike aspects of our lives, in ways in which many of us have not experienced before. Reflection on our lives and discipleship is a Lenten practice, but the pain of separation from loved ones, and the fear of contact with others, has been very hard on us all, and has left me wondering about how best to approach Lent itself.

I have found inspiration for Lent from the writings of Thomas Merton, a Trappist Monk who had a gift for communicating about the spiritual life from his own experiences of isolation. In his book, *Seasons of Celebration*, Merton reflects on the purpose of Lent, which he sees as being above all 'a preparation to rejoice in God's love'. This preparation, he states, consists of receiving the gift of God's mercy, 'a gift which we receive in so far as we open our hearts to it, casting out what cannot remain in the same room with mercy'. The first thing to cast out, says Merton, is fear. Fear, he writes, 'narrows the little entrance of our heart. It shrinks up our capacity to love. It freezes up our power to give ourselves'.

The pandemic has brutally revealed the fragility and mortal limitations of life, from which we as a society try to hide, and of which we are fearful. None of us know how our lives are going to unfold, but we can know that in God there is hope and love, a stability in the midst of chaos, and a strength in the face of uncertainty. Whatever is happening around us, we have no need to be fearful of God. God's love for us reminds us of the unshakable essence of who we are, made in God's image. We can approach God in prayer, trusting in God's grace and mercy for whatever we face. As I reflect on all of these things, I have found the following prayer from Thomas Merton particularly helpful in my preparation for Lent this year:

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that, if I do this, You will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.
Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*, 1958

Whatever your personal troubles and challenges, may this Lent be an opportunity to cast out fear, and as we make this journey together in preparation to rejoice in God's love at Easter may you know God's mercy in all of its abundance.

Grace and peace,

+ Christine

Vaccination, it is good for us all

MILLIONS of people in the UK have now been vaccinated against Covid-19 and among those to be immunised are the Bishop of Newcastle and the former Archbishop of York.

Bishop Christine and the Rt Revd John Sentamu, who now lives in Northumberland, received their jabs in February and called on others to do the same via Twitter.

The retired Archbishop of York said: "I beseech us all to respond without delay when we are summoned to go and be vaccinated. It is good for us all."

Bishop Christine, who received her jab at Newcastle Racecourse, described the vaccination centre as an 'amazing operation' and thanked the 'wonderful volunteers' administering the vaccinations.

Earlier in the month, Church of England Bishops joined an NHS-backed campaign calling on congregations, communities and individuals to play their part in encouraging everyone who is offered a Covid-19 vaccine to take up the opportunity, and to have access to accurate information.

With concerns over misinformation and significant numbers indicating mistrust, including in some UK BAME communities, the bishops were speaking as part of a united churches campaign called Give Hope.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said in the campaign launch video: "One of the things we can all do is to take the vaccine as soon as we're offered it. This is one of the best and fastest routes out of this terrible pandemic."

■ For more information on the Give Hope campaign, visit www.yourneighbour.org/vaccine



John Sentamu @JohnSentamu · Feb 9

This is me being vaccinated by Nurse Christine with the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine this morning. Please! Please! I beseech us all to respond without delay when we are summoned to go and be Vaccinated. It is good for us all. THANK YOU 🙏 @JohnSentamu



You Retweeted



Christine Hardman @BishopNewcastle

Just had my AstraZeneca jab at Newcastle Racecourse. What an amazing operation. A huge thank you to all the wonderful volunteers (a freezing job for some today) and the person who gave the vaccine. She said it is the most worthwhile thing she has done.

1:31 PM · Feb 10, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

2 Retweets 89 Likes

**NEWCASTLE
CATHEDRAL**

View from the Lantern

*With The Revd Canon Peter Dobson,
Canon for Outreach and Discipleship*

For the last 12 months Cathedral Square, you will realise (if you haven't seen for yourself), has looked rather different! Nestled beside Queen Victoria are the site cabins and offices, all carefully screened off with brightly coloured hoardings telling the story of the transformation afoot behind them. One of the messages tells those who pass by (... not that there have been all that many passers-by of late!) that we are 'Bringing 900 years of history to life'!

Week by week we get to see more of how that will look. Most of the new nave floor (accompanied by its underfloor heating) is now laid, and the ledger stones we have been working so hard to preserve are safely and beautifully set in their new homes in the north and south aisles. It becomes more and more exciting as we see the final drafts of the designs for the Cathedral's interpretation scheme coming to fruition, how the different images, text and video, and the sound and light show, will well and truly bring these important stories and the history of the Cathedral to life, and not just from the last 900 years!

During Lent 2020, having moved out of the nave, with cathedral life turned upside down (even before Covid-19) we committed to spending time in weekly groups reflecting on exile, the biblical and more modern day experiences of it. Little did we know what was around the corner! This Lent, as we look forward to a return to a transformed cathedral building and the easing of the other restrictions on our lives, it is another broader interpretation scheme we are thinking about, how our long history as the pilgrim people of God can help to re-shape and re-make us. Considering different aspects of what it meant for the people of God to return from exile in Babylon, this Lent we are reflecting on the times we are living in today: what treasures from the past we want to hold onto and what we might need to let go of; what sort of Church do we want to be and rebuild; whether the grass is ever greener or do we always want things to be different to how they are; and how might we begin to go about 'building back better', with a renewed commitment to the difference faith can make for wider society.

Using Lent to think about how we are formed by our history, and thinking of all the work going on to tell hidden stories from the cathedral's history, as part of the celebration of Women's History Month in March, we will also be shining a weekly spotlight on one of four remarkable women whose Christian faith infused their specific contribution to their time and ours.

Women's History Month celebrates women's contributions to history, culture and society and, via YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, Helen Wright (one of our Readers) and Thomas Sharp (our Curate) will be challenging us to identify a mystery guest from history by sharing three clues to her identity. The women chosen come from politics, the Church, the arts, and international development. They all dared to question the world around them, and so resonate with the Women's Day theme for 2021: #choosetochallenge. But, will you be able to 'Guess Who did What'?

Helen and Thomas will also be joined in their videos each week by a colleague from the Common Ground in Sacred Space Project Team who will be telling us about particular women linked to the Cathedral's history. Why not give yourself a 5 minute break each Wednesday in March, and join in the challenge?

■ **The Women's History Month Quizzes will be accessible on our YouTube Channel (<https://tinyurl.com/NclCathedral>). More details about our programme of Lent Groups 'Returning from Exile, Returning to Normal?' can be found at <https://newcastlecathedral.org.uk/> The gatherings are via Zoom, on Wednesdays at 2pm and Thursdays at 7:30pm throughout Lent, and all are welcome, as always! If you would like to receive the joining details please e-mail peter.dobson@newcastlecathedral.org.uk.**

Grant joy for abbey's Saxon Crypt



► The Saxon Crypt was built 1,300 years ago

HEXHAM Abbey has received a financial boost from the government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund to help fund repairs during the coronavirus pandemic.

A grant of £24,500 has been awarded to allow environmental investigation work and masonry repairs to the abbey's Anglo-Saxon Crypt.

Preserved and largely unchanged in 1,300 years, the crypt is the only part of a church built on the site by Bishop Wilfrid in 674AD that survives intact.

This funding comes from a part of the Culture Recovery Fund called the Heritage Stimulus Fund and is administered on behalf of the government by Historic England.

The grants of up to £25,000 are being allocated to cherished heritage sites across the country to cover urgently needed maintenance and repairs.

As well as rescuing precious heritage buildings in need, the injection of cash will protect livelihoods for some of the most vulnerable heritage specialists and contractors working in the sector.

Revd David Glover, Rector of Hexham, said: "Our Anglo-Saxon crypt would normally be attracting tens of thousands of visitors a year and it is vital that we do all that we can to preserve it. It is the last intact part of the original church built here by Bishop Wilfrid 1,300 years ago, so it's of immense historical and religious significance."

"Hexham Abbey is of international heritage standing and we are absolutely delighted to receive this grant from Historic England at a time when additional grant funding is also allowing us to proceed with our important Abbey Roof refurbishment. The work here, using the very best in skilled workmanship and the very highest conservation techniques, will help preserve this incredible building for our future generations."

Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden, said: "These grants will help the places that have shaped our skylines for hundreds of years and that continue to define culture in our towns and cities. We're protecting heritage and culture in every corner of the country to save jobs and ensure it's there for future generations to enjoy."

Welcome Charlotte!

By Canon Alan Hughes

WHEN I first buttoned up a cassock as a young server almost 70 years ago, I could never have imagined that in venerable old age I would do so preparing to join a congregation of over 100 in a tiny 8 x 10 foot study, gazing into a free standing device 8 inches x 5 inches by half an inch.

On Wednesday 27 January 2021 I did just that. Due to the Covid restrictions, The Revd Charlotte Osborn was licensed as Priest-in-Charge of Ford and Etal and Lowick and Kylene, with Ancroft by the Bishop of Newcastle via Zoom video conferencing.

Instead of gathering her flock in Ford Church, Bishop Christine welcomed us from her Newcastle Chapel, Sarah Hills, Rural Dean of Norham presented Charlotte from

her Holy Island Vicarage study, Charlotte made her declarations and oaths from her temporary accommodation at Branxton.

The readings were delivered by churchwardens from their Ford and Lowick homes, Lord James Joicey, parish Patron welcomed Charlotte and husband Leo from his home at Etal Manor, John Daniels on behalf of his fellow churchwardens from his home at Lowick, Jacq Dalrymple Headteacher of Hugh Joicey School and Rebecca Simpson Head Teacher of Lowick and Holy Island Schools, in their respective homes, were followed by Archdeacon of Northumberland Catherine Sourbut-Groves from her Morpeth home.

The congregation of over 100 gathered from far and wide from their homes the



► Revd Charlotte Osborn's licensing took place via Zoom

length and breadth of the United Kingdom and abroad. They were able, not only to applaud Charlotte and join fully in the service but also spend time informally afterwards, wishing her every blessing on her ministry. A technological miracle which saved a lot of fuel and emissions, food for thought when planning future gatherings as we give climate change serious thought.

Canon Professor Dr John W Bull RIP



► Canon Professor Dr John W Bull

IT is with great sadness we share the news that Canon Professor Dr John Bull died on January 22nd after many years of faithful service to the Church.

John served his local parish of St. Cuthbert Bedlington, our diocese and the National Church for many years and in many ways, not least as a member of General Synod, Diocesan Synod and Bishop's Council, as Chair of the Diocesan Education Board and a Lay Canon of Newcastle Cathedral. He was also a Council member of the National Society (Church of England) for Promoting Religious Education. The society informs and encourages church schools

throughout England and Wales promoting Christian education.

John was an academic and a chartered civil, structural and highway engineer who authored and edited books. He had worshipped at St Cuthbert's since 1979, during which time he had been Churchwarden, Vice-Chair and Chair of the PCC.

Please pray for John, wife Sonia, son Jonathan, his family and friends giving thanks for his life, and entrust him to God's keeping.

May John rest in peace, and rise in glory.

By Bishop Mark Wroe

'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?' (Isaiah 43.18-19)

I can't wait for things to get back to normal. However, one year into a global pandemic has made us all think that whatever 'normal' might be - it likely lies ahead of us rather than getting back to something behind us. We seem to be increasingly aware that we are actually moving towards a 'new normal'. In fact we are already used to adapting to 'new normals' - things like getting married, moving house, starting a new job all mean adjusting to a new way of life. What makes Covid-19 different is that we're all doing it at the same time.

It sounds like Isaiah was saying the same to God's people in these verses. He proclaims that God is doing a new thing. He is doing nothing less than announcing a new normal, a shift away from the former things. God's people were not going backwards but into something new which is emerging and growing. And they were all doing it together.

At our Diocesan Synod in May 2019, Bishop Christine spoke from these same verses in Isaiah about our need to reshape and reimagine ministry. Not doing more with less, but doing things differently. It is a call to imagine a new normal. From our baptism onward, throughout our lives, we are summoned to witness God's love and to work for the coming of God's kingdom, but our context and our challenges are changing, and changing radically. We need to adapt to meet these new challenges and work out how to worship, work and witness in this new normal. Helping us to discern how we all do this together is the task of our Transformation Project.

The Transformation Project has begun by asking, what are the next steps in

A New Normal?

growing church
bringing hope



our diocese in growing church bringing hope? Bishop's Staff, Bishop's Council, Diocesan and Deanery Synods have begun to explore this question. It's also been discussed with lots of people who have expressed an interest in knowing more or responded to our requests for help, and we are very grateful. Things are still emerging and growing, and will continue to do so as we all pray, ponder and work out where God is leading us together. But there are some things we would like to share with you and two ways we hope you will want to get involved.

We want to share our values and priorities with you. This is about how we continue to witness God's love and work for God's kingdom in all our parishes, so understanding our values and priorities is key. For several years, Newcastle Diocese has expressed a desire to be generous, engaged, and open. Our next steps will have these same values, but expressed in a new way for the road ahead of us:

■ Open to God's transforming love:

We want to be rooted and grounded even more in God's love which flows outward into the world: rooted in our relationship with God, in our deepening prayer and in our growing faith which inspires our continued witnessing to that love.

■ Generous with God's transforming gifts:

We want to be even more generous with one another, sharing our gifts as the whole people of God, ordained and lay working in collaboration: generous in our attitudes, our finances and our resources.

■ Engaged in God's transforming work in the world:

We want to be even more engaged in serving our communities and schools, working in partnership in outreach and evangelism, in care and compassion, and in helping to tackle urgent social justice and environmental concerns, locally, nationally and globally.

As we adjust to the 'new normal' we are working out together, we hope these values will help shape our actions and our priorities. We are also discerning three priorities for the coming years:

■ Bringing Good News

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me

to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim

release to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,

to proclaim

the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4.18-19)

The Church does not just offer good advice, we bring the good news of Jesus Christ. We want to ensure all our outward facing activities as God's people reflect the priorities of Jesus in Luke 4.18-19. Pressures about finance and decline try to turn us inwards, but we pray for courage, grace and imagination to keep turning outwards in love and faith.

■ Growing in Christ

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." (Colossians 2.6-7)

So often we might be tempted to think we have made it, that we have got life sorted and nothing needs to change. But we always continue to grow, in our faith and understanding of God, in our calling and vocation, as Paul describes in Colossians 2.6-7. We never stop following Jesus and that means we are always on the move!

We pray we can offer opportunities for anyone who wants to explore and nurture their faith to do so, and to see growing faith in our own lives, our households, churches and schools.

➤ Bishop Mark Wroe



Rural Strand

By Revd Dr Helen Savage

How do rural parishes manage – and what can we learn from them?

WE may think we know our rural parishes, how they're run and the pattern of ministry they experience, but truth be told, we don't really know the half of it - but if we're going to plan for the future as carefully, effectively and as imaginatively as possible, we need to know where we're really starting from.

How have the ways we make decisions and manage local church business been affected by the changes we've faced over the last decade or so? And what are the special challenges that this last, very challenging year, has thrown up?

The Rural Strand of *growing church bringing hope* decided to gather some hard evidence about what's been really going on in nine very different parishes across the archdeaconry of Lindisfarne. We hope that this study will help us see if the different ways of working together that the Rural Strand has promoted over the last few years has made a difference to parish life.

We then hope that it will enable us to understand how parish structures might be organised to support rural communities and their churches better.



➤ Consultant Nicola Bell is carrying out a study on nine rural parishes

The studies have been looking at patterns of ministry and of governance (local church management) - who does what and who decides and how these patterns have changed over the last ten years. We want to explore what works and where things go wrong, what best practice looks like and who our key partners are in the wider community. What are the factors that have led to growth (or decline)?

The studies are being carried out for us by Nicola Bell, a highly-experienced consultant who herself lives and worships in rural Northumberland and has a deep knowledge of the region. Much of her work is in the evaluation of projects funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Arts Council and similar organisations.

Nicola also carried out the immensely valuable evaluation of the Inspired Futures Project that included a number of churches across the diocese.

In these incredibly difficult times it hasn't, of course, proved possible to have the number of face-to-face meetings that we and Nicola had hoped for - we'd intended, for example, to convene focus groups in each of the places we're studying, but Nicola has been highly resourceful using all the tools of communication that have become so familiar over the last year, especially Zoom, but also, and because broadband in rural Northumberland is sometimes anything but state of the art, the phone.

We know that just nine studies can't

be comprehensive, but the point of detailed case studies is that they throw up detailed, rich information with insights and ideas and fresh questions that can be tested by a wider range of other means elsewhere.

Done well, they're highly cost effective and well suited to understanding situations like those in our rural parishes, which often are marked by so many layers of complex, interweaving relationships. They get under the skin of a place in a way that simpler questionnaires can never do.

So where are we studying? The list immediately shows that despite obvious differences we can't cover every kind of situation and it's also clear, we hope, that we haven't set out just to celebrate success. There are, indeed, places where some amazing things are happening, but we deliberately included some parishes that struggle with scant resources - human and financial. They also embrace the places where the Rural Strand has encouraged new approaches to shared ministry and where the Rural Churches for Everyone Project is focused. Roughly from north to south, we're looking at Norham, Kirknewton, Embleton, Hartburn,

Cresswell, Corbridge, Haydon Bridge and Blanchland - and then just to test out our approach in a very different, non-rural setting, but one with lots of very different pressures, we've included Seaton Hirst.

We hope that the studies will not just prove valuable to senior staff and the Rural Strand but to the nine places themselves - and there's already reassuring evidence that this is indeed the case. It can be a very helpful and often affirming experience to have a sensitive researcher ask searching questions about why things are done in the way they are and what factors impact on local life. We all need time to stand back for a while and reflect on where we're at and why.

With a fair wind, the individual studies will be complete by Easter, but because the information Nicola has collected is sometimes sensitive, we won't publish individual reports and no information will be made public that the local churches wish to remain confidential; but we hope that the broader issues and questions that are revealed by the study as a whole can be shared widely so that we can all benefit from this valuable research. Watch this space!

TOWARDS A SAFER CHURCH

By Donna Brown, Safeguarding Operations Officer

Introducing the Safeguarding Parish Dashboard

EVERYONE has been living through incredibly tricky times recently. For some, it has been more challenging than for others. Not being able to see family, or friends. Struggling financially due to furlough or lost jobs. Worrying about catching a virus that is killing so many. Worrying for your family. Times are hard. And due to this, safeguarding is more important than it has ever been. But, it is also much more challenging when our usual methods are removed from us.

At Church House, the safeguarding team have been spending this time supporting you in any way that we can. It's important to us that you know we are here and every enquiry is relevant.

A large part of this support is trying to make things easier, ensure strategies are working and encouraging people to use them. This is why we have decided to roll out the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard designed by Graeme Pringle. The Parish Dashboard is an amazing tool for all Parish Safeguarding Officers and PCCs to keep track of safeguarding tasks which need to be completed within the parish and help ensure everything runs smoothly. To date 22 dioceses (or 2000 parishes!) across the country are using the dashboard and feedback has been fantastic.

We are aware that everyone is under pres-

sure, and this dashboard should not be seen as additional work for the PSOs, but a tool for the whole PCC to be able to ensure that everything the parish needs to complete has been done. This tracks the tasks that you are already doing and gives you a tool to see when things will be out of date and explains what the steps are for you to review.

We have trialled the dashboard across a handful of parishes who have found it incredibly simple but very useful. You need minimal IT experience to use it as it is very intuitive.



Donna Brown

And here's the big difference. With this dashboard you are not only getting a tool to help your parish stay organised with safeguarding requirements and be better able to support its parishioners, but you also get me. I'm Donna Brown and I am the diocese's Safeguarding Operations Officer, and a major part of my role is to support PCCs and PSOs with this dashboard and the tasks that lie behind it. That means that if you are finding it difficult you can

email me on d.brown@newcastle.anglican.org, or give me a call on 07436220861 and I will support you through your problem completely. I will also be running full training when we commence the roll out, on various days and times



(probably via Zoom due to circumstances), and ongoing support through 'drop in' sessions where PSOs will get a chance to discuss any issues, offer feedback, get support and share resources. If you are desperate for a quick look of what is to come the designer has shared a video with us, which can be found at vimeo.com/315725141

The parish dashboard is a very exciting change, and like all change it can seem a little scary, but I promise you with the help and support I am able to give we will get this implemented quickly and easily and in the long term it will make things much easier for parishes.

PSO FORUMS

THE safeguarding team have set up a schedule of Zoom Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO) Forums for 2021.

Following on from the success of the forums held in autumn 2020, the 90-minute sessions will take place throughout the year on various dates and times so they are accessible to all. These forums give PSOs the chance to connect with others, think and talk about safeguarding practice, and receive support. The informal sessions will focus on how PSOs are finding their role, what is working well in their parish in terms of safeguarding, and what support would be helpful for their role.

For more information on dates and booking details, contact Donna Brown, Safeguarding Operations Officer, at d.brown@newcastle.anglican.org or 07436220861.

SAFEGUARDING LEADERSHIP LEARNING

BOOKINGS are open for the Safeguarding Leadership Learning 2021 programme.

The learning takes place over two 90-minute sessions, currently scheduled as Zoom sessions, but the safeguarding team hope to add some face-to-face events if Covid restrictions allow. Each learning programme has space for 14 delegates only, so early booking is advised.

To view the programme timetable and to book your place, visit www.newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding/safeguardingtraining

David Gray RIP 1932-2021

DAVID was a Christian of unwavering faith.

He loved the Lord and found strength through his faith and through the church which had been his spiritual home for decades. Serving as a Christian minister for over 65 years and at 88 still going strong in the Lord.

Preaching, teaching, house communions (before lockdown) sending out his weekly mediations to over 50 people. He never stopped.

As a Christian, death for David held no fear. He was certain of the resurrection to eternal life, confident in the knowledge that when he died, his soul, his spirit would go home to be with the Lord.

He faced his cancer with courage and made it quite clear that he was not going to have any investigative intrusive treatment.

His death has come as a huge shock to us all, but David has departed this



Above, David Gray 1932-2021. Right, Link's March 2017 front page featuring David celebrating 60 years of ministry

life the way he would have wanted to, still in the service of his Lord. For David what can I say but as the reward of his faith he is with his Lord. What can be better than that?

I had the privilege and honour of sharing in ministry with David for 13 years; he was as I often described him my right-hand-man. My lay reader and for the last two years my church warden.

His portfolio is impressive. Chaplain to the deaf, pioneer in that he was the first person to sign for the deaf on Tyne Tees Television, lay reader for over 65 years, and church warden. Although he couldn't read music, he was an accomplished musician who learned to play the organ by sound.

His support of myself and my family

By Revd Mark Edward MBE, Vicar of St Matthews with St Cuthberts within Christ the King Team Ministry

and the church has been unwavering: such kindness, such generosity and affirmation, such grace. He touched many people's lives with his ministry, some who have themselves entered the ministry because of David.

When I first came to Newcastle from Barrow-in-Furness in 2008, he gave me confidence, he inspired me. I grew in ministry and in stature because of David's affirmation, support, kindness, prayers and love.

His ministry to me, and faithful serving of the church and wider community for 65 years is priceless. He was widowed from his first wife Joyce in 1988 but was to find love again. At age 61, while chaplain to the Northumbria Deaf Mission, he found happiness with Helen. They had been married for 29 years. He was also a much-loved father to Mark, father-in-law to Kate and grandfather to Jonnie and Francesca.

What did our churches and clergy do in the war against Covid?

By Canon Alan Hughes MBE TD CF,
Chaplain to Berwick Infirmary and
The High Sheriff of Northumberland

'THERE are no atheists in foxholes' is an aphorism attributed to a World War II military chaplain.

Covid-19 has been described as a 'war' and just as folk asked after 1945 "what did you do in the war?" just so, many will engage in post pandemic reflection and ask "what did our churches and clergy do in the war against Covid?"

Nostalgia is not what it used to be, yet my entire early life did revolve around my parish church. Sunday school, acting in Nativity and Passion plays, regular all-age social gatherings, Bible study, drama and youth groups, I became a scout, choir boy and altar server. Three weeks after my Institution at Berwick, my boyhood vicar Tony Smith wrote "did you ever wonder where I came from to be your vicar in 1952, from serving as Curate to Berwick Parish Church under your predecessor Canon Hicks (1939-52)." Tony visited parishioners' homes regularly, his mantra 'a house going parson makes a church going people' learnt from Canon Hicks, Vicar of Berwick.

After military service I entered Theological College, then served four parishes over 40 years, also holding part-time chaplaincies with police, ambulance service, St John Ambulance, University Officer Training Corps, Army Cadet, Territorial Army and the NHS. The Church of England website chaplaincy page states: "Some clergy become healthcare chaplains because of difficulties they experience within the institutional Church, others do so in response to a 'vocation within a vocation'. It is important to remember that chaplaincy is a specialist area of ministry: not everyone is called to exercise this genre of public ministry and not everyone has the skills or capacity to do so."

When I was interviewed for the post at Berwick by Bishop Alec Graham's Labrador dog, Scylla was seated on the Bishop's chair, me on a sofa whilst Alec sat on the floor, this scenario established during his Oxford and Lincoln days. Alec eventually pronounced his decision

- "Scylla likes you, so you can't be all bad." Scylla, however, forgot to mention that the post also involved 12 hours each week serving as Chaplain to Berwick Infirmary. I only learnt that a month into post, on discovering my stipend was a third less than expected. Alec, Scylla, the archdeacon and whoever typed the job specification, each had mistakenly thought that the other had informed me of this major addition to my duties. Scylla had also forgotten to inform the NHS of my appointment, leading to many months of belt tightening until the issue was resolved.

My 26 years as Chaplain to Berwick Infirmary have however proved to be amongst the most rewarding of my ministry. The comradeship of fellow chaplains and the regular theological and pastoral stimulation provided by the military and NHS in particular, rather than sapping my strength, have affirmed and supported my vocation, enabled me to cope with the challenges of civilian parish life, which can be a lonely existence. Hospital chaplaincy has enabled me to engage with patients, staff and clergy of all denominations, faiths and those claiming no faith.

Chaplains have been particular engaged during the pandemic, places of worship have been closed, hospitals have not. Like all of the NHS staff on the frontline against Covid, chaplains have continued to be generous, open and engaged, the best of people through the very worst of times, supporting patients, relatives and staff face-to-face, separated only by personal protection equipment.



Alan has worked as a hospital chaplain throughout the pandemic

The Church has been accused of navel gazing in recent times but with Covid restrictions on church buildings, there have been no 'navels' to gaze in to. There has however been ample opportunity for congregations and clergy to look out and into the parishes they have been called to serve. Some have done admirably, the evidence is a matter of record and must form a reflective post-pandemic audit to influence how churches re-engage with a changed society. Cathedrals have opened as vaccination centres, some parishes have produced vital nourishing online worship and pastoral support, others have embarked upon establishing better pastoral networks for their membership and the housebound, many have supported the initiatives of civic and community groups. Each of us will emerge with our own local stories to add to our learning, some less orthodox than others, such as

one priest in central London, who on having his church closed, borrowed a microphone and went from street to street on his bike giving services of 10 minutes maximum. Windows opened, people paused, and on he went... Rather refreshing to take the 'what can be done' route rather than the 'we aren't allowed to' route.

At the start of the second millennium, Wulfstan of York said: "The Christian Church ought to teach us who we are, where we come from and what our end will be." There are no atheists in foxholes and I believe that many more seekers after truth will emerge from the pandemic and pray that our local congregations will be prepared to serve them with faith, hope and love, invite them to share their faith journey.

Covid Bereavement Support Service

Revd Katy Francis, Chaplain/ Spiritual Care Lead Marie Curie Newcastle, is keen to share news of this vital service which has been set-up following the Covid-19 pandemic.

IN response to unprecedented levels of grief amidst social isolation, Marie Curie has developed a Bereavement Support Service in response to the pandemic which is entirely community-facing.



With the help of trained bereavement volunteers, Covid Bereavement Support is now available to people throughout the North East who are struggling with their feelings of loss.

Covid need not have been the cause of death, as Marie Curie recognise that everyone who has been bereaved at this time will have been affected by the current situation.

There need not have been any prior contact with the hospice, the service is free and all support is currently delivered via telephone or Teams online, with a return to meeting in person as soon as this option is again possible.

If you would like to find out more about the service, Louise Bowen, Covid Bereavement Service Co-ordinator, would be glad to have a chat on 07754747982 or louise.bowen@mariecurie.org.uk

For those struggling with their bereavement, getting in touch with the service to request support can be as easy as leaving a message on the above number.

Alternatively, people can access the service via submitting a self-referral form available on the Newcastle Hospice website, where a form for professional use is also available at <http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/bereavement/Newcastle-self-referral>

#PrayerForTheNation

THROUGHOUT the month of February and continuing this month, Christians across the UK are joining in #PrayerForTheNation.

This call to prayer, which originally took place during the second lockdown, was renewed last month in response to reaching the terrible milestone of more than two million lives lost worldwide to Covid-19, and 100,000 deaths in the UK.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York invite all to call on God in prayer and to set aside time every evening to pause and pray, particularly at 6pm.



In a joint letter, the Archbishops said: "None of this is easy. Very many of us are experiencing isolation, loneliness, anxiety and despondency like never before. Many people have lost their livelihoods. Our economy struggles. Also, the necessary restrictions we live with have also prevented us from being alongside loved ones as they died, or even at their graveside.

"All grief profoundly affects us, but this pandemic grief is so hard. Therefore, we need to support each other. We do this by following the guidelines. But we also do it by reaching out to each other with care and kindness. One thing we can all do is pray."

People are invited to set an alarm, light a candle or use a light on your mobile phone as a prompt to pray, or the ringing of church or cathedral bells may serve as a reminder.

Follow Thy Kingdom Come on social media for daily prayers, or explore the Church of England's website at www.churchofengland.org/resources/prayer-nation for further resources.

Resources launched

THE Children's Society has launched new free resources for Lent and Mothering Sunday.

The Children's Society

The Lent resource includes video talks, discussion questions, activities and prayers for small groups, all designed to be used online.

The Mothering Sunday worship resource includes all-age talks, activities, children's and youth group activities, designed to be used online or in person.

They are available to download at www.childrenssociety.org.uk/len-and-mothering-Sunday

Love is all around – hearts and chocolates bring joy to residents

NEARLY 500 hearts and chocolates with cards were placed around a North Tyneside parish, blessing neighbours and bringing much-needed joy.

Each card, tied to fences, gates and lampposts over Valentine's weekend promoted the local church's website with an invitation to people to email in their prayer requests.

The reaction of residents in Killingworth Parish, at a time when many people are stuck at home, has been extremely positive.

Interim Minister at St John's Killingworth, Revd Sarah Moon, said: "We know how much harder this lockdown has been. As a church we wanted to offer love and hope to our community and we saw how much the knitted angels meant to our community at Christmas. We wanted to continue to bless our community. The next challenge is what we can do to share the Easter story!"

Some of the church's members have also decorated their home windows with hearts and messages of love.

The reaction to the hearts and chocolates in Killingworth has been wonderful. These are some posts from social media:

"How beautiful from the local Priest and Killingworth parish church to leave these outside our address... little bit of thought and love on Valentines weekend #kindnessmatters"

"Thank you to Killingworth parish church for spreading some happiness. This is so nice x"

"Been out on a freezing cold walk this morning and the kids found these. Thanks so much St John's it's made the kids day #loveneverends"

"Thank you Killingworth Parish Church. My daughter found this and gave it to me and made my day how sweet."

"Walking along Hill Heads Wagonway and had a nice little find of this heart from the Killingworth Parish Church."

"Huge thanks to the ever celestial Rev Sarah Moon for dropping off this box of delights for us at school. Just what Friday ordered! Wishing everyone a wonderful, restful half term."



➤ A knitted heart adorns railings outside George Stephenson High School

Valentine 'bombing'

By Jill Swaile (St Peter's Falstone church warden) Katrine Anderson, Jean Swailes and Marie Ness.

St Peter's is a small church in the small village of Falstone surrounded by the mighty Kielder forest in the shadow of the reservoir and the last church before the Scottish border.

Falstone has a real sense of community spirit and before the pandemic there was lots going on and lots to be part of.

Since lockdown, whilst we cannot meet in person, the whole community has pulled together to provide support for each other, keeping in touch with those who live alone and shopping for essentials.

In 2020 (when allowed) St Peter's held services both inside and outside.

During the second lockdown members of the church delivered Christmas cards to the whole community, popping

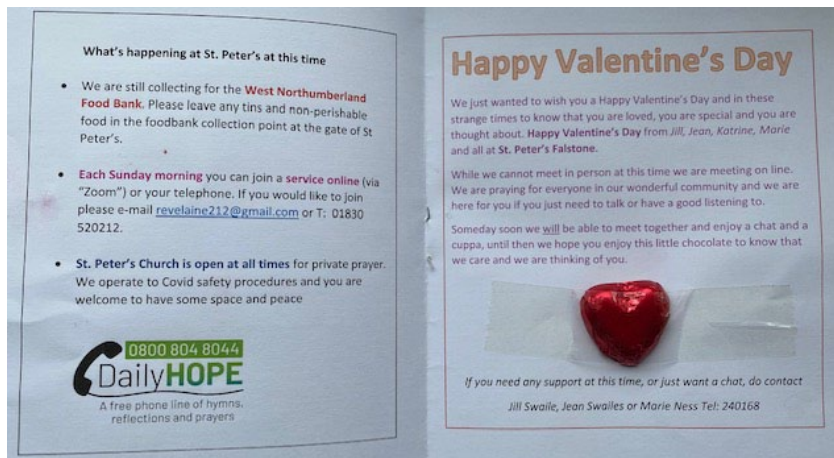
a card through every door and engaging in 'socially distanced' conversation.

In the dark days of February we wanted to remind the community that the church was 'open' for private prayer and ensure everyone knew we were praying for them and able to offer support if needed.

On 14 February every household was sent a Valentine's card with a wee chocolate heart inside plus a prayer so the whole community knew they were loved and thought about:

"We lift to God those we hold in our hearts -praying for their health, their well-being and their sense of hope. We pray that even when loved ones cannot physically be together we do not feel apart. We ask for God's help in our communicating, our connecting and our caring for our community"

■ Follow St Peter's Falstone on [twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)



➤ The inside of the card featured a lovely message and chocolate heart



➤ Falstone resident Ivan Swaile was delighted to receive his card

Generous legacies

AS we move through our lives we all hope that we have, in one way or another, made a difference. This may be related to raising a family, the work that we do, our church life, volunteering, hobbies and pursuits, or through any other means.

Now, more than ever, as we look to the future we like to make plans to ensure that the people we care about, or the causes we are passionate about, can continue to flourish long into the future. If we are comfortable making plans for our loved ones, or charitable causes, where do our churches sit on our list of priorities? Perhaps we could ask ourselves if we think our churches really need our support?

One myth around finance and funding is that the Church of England is wealthy and funds all of our churches. The reality these days lies closer to home; most of our churches are funded exclusively by the generosity of their local parishioners. There is no financial safety net, our churches require our financial support to remain viable both now, and in to the future.

But, as generosity is at the heart of our faith, and our own generosity is a testament and hallmark of our faith in action, surely everything will be fine? Not necessarily; the 2020 Anglican Giving Survey highlighted that a third of Anglicans do not give to their church.

So, against this backdrop, now more than ever, we may need to think about what really matters to us, and how we demonstrate this? We can make donations in the here and now

By Andrew Tinkler, Generous Giving Adviser



but we could also consider leaving a gift in our will.

As we approach a new financial year, many people take stock and reflect about their hopes going forward and how they can best support the causes they care about.

Whilst thinking about wills and legacies may feel uncomfortable at times, it remains an option that people could consider. Seen in a wider context, 75 per cent of Britons regularly give to charity but only 6 per cent leave a gift in their will. In the voluntary sector itself, legacies are worth over £3 billion per annum, and legacies in the Church of England are worth over £60 million per annum.

Larger household-name charities such as: Cancer Research, RNLI, RSPCA, all outstrip the Church of England in terms of receiving gifts

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in wills.

The Anglican Giving Survey also told us that only 15 per cent of Anglicans have ever been asked to support their church by leaving a legacy. So, perhaps we could improve how we talk about wills and legacies and make a stronger connection between your Christian generosity and how you could make a difference for your local church or diocese.

There are an abundance of positive stories (see [Church Legacy](#) here and a [Diocese of Exeter case study](#) here) about how a gift in a will can transform mission and ministry in your church and community for a long time to come, and people are increasingly open about discussing what they would like their gift to pay for. Gifts have covered the costs of church renovations, youth workers, messy church and so on.

If generous giving is an integral part of our discipleship as Christian believers, we can view ourselves as resourcing God's mission in the world way into the future. In furtherance of this, according to the World Happiness Report (2019) generosity makes people happy!

So, whilst we are all blessed with varying degrees of material resources the call to generosity should apply to us all equally as Christians. Plus, if it enables us to live out our faith, sustain mission, preserve the church buildings that mean something to us, then it is both life affirming and a good thing to do all round.

■ For more information about supporting your church with a legacy, please get in touch with our Generous Giving Team and check out the dedicated page on our website here as well as the [Church of England](#) webpages.

Aiming to become carbon neutral by 2030

RECOGNISING that a faithful response to the injustice and ecological crisis of climate change requires more urgent action than our previous 2050 target, in November, Diocesan Synod amended the diocese's environmental policy.

The amendment reflects the General Synod's call for the Church of England to become carbon neutral by 2030.

What do we mean by 'carbon net zero'?

Carbon net zero means that the amount of carbon dioxide emissions we produce is balanced by renewable energy or offsets. The Church of England is working towards the 2030 target by tackling its Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, this is carbon dioxide emitted through the burning of fossil fuels for our energy use (heating, lighting etc.) and our fuel for travel.

Then to calculate your 'net' carbon footprint you minus any 100 per cent renewable electricity or offsets your church purchases.

Carbon neutral churches

Carbon net zero by 2030 might seem like an ambitious target; however, many churches could cut their carbon emissions to net zero this year! Start with these five steps towards a carbon neutral church:



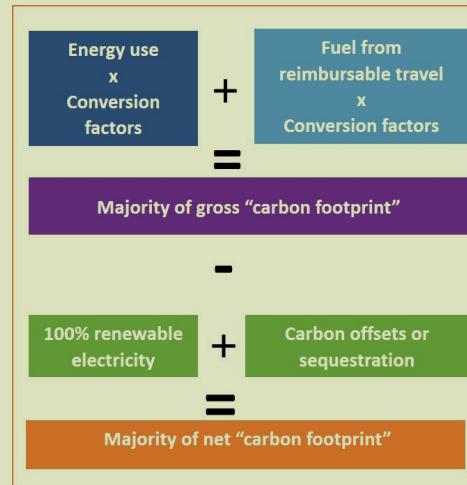
By Bethany Hume, Assistant Secretary

1: Measure the carbon footprint of your church.

The Energy Footprint Tool opens in March for church treasurers or clergy to complete, it can be accessed at parishreturns.churchofengland.org. This calculates your church's carbon footprint based on the energy use of the church, all you need are your church's electricity and gas/oil bills. If you want a more detailed calculation of your church's carbon emissions, to include aspects such as travel and food try 360carbon.org.

2: Switch your church's electricity supply to a 100 per cent renewable tariff.

One way to reduce your carbon footprint easily and quickly is to change the type of electricity you buy to 100 per cent renewable. This will have a large impact on your carbon footprint, you will have zero-carbon electricity!



We are in the process of exploring a diocesan-wide green energy savings scheme, a service that will help you switch to a renewable tariff and save money on your bills – watch this space!

3: If your church heating is gas, switch to a carbon offset gas tariff.

Heating is usually the largest part of a church's carbon footprint, switch to a carbon offset gas tariff to reduce your heating net carbon footprint to zero.

To reduce their overall carbon footprint in the long term, churches that are heated by gas and oil could start to plan changing their heating systems to electric systems e.g. air source or ground source heat pumps, under-floor heating.

4: Calculate church-related travel of clergy and volunteers, encouraging a switch to public transport or walking or cycling for those that are able.

To calculate your church's carbon emissions from travel, use expenses data or survey church volunteers for their average church-related travel. Enter the mileage into the **360 carbon calculator**. Walking and cycling if possible, using public transport, car sharing and holding some meetings online will all help reduce the number of car journeys and emissions. Electrical vehicles will also help as they become more widely used.

5: Offset the rest

Once you have tried to reduce your carbon footprint, offset what remains to get to net zero. **Climate Stewards** is a Christian charity that offsets carbon by supporting community projects in the developing world which absorb carbon from the atmosphere. This costs £20 per tonne of carbon dioxide. If your church has two tonnes of carbon left after switching to a renewable electricity tariff and carbon offset gas tariff, it would cost £40 a year to be net zero carbon.

■ For more information and inspiration:

Take a look at the **Practical Path to Net Zero Checklist** at bit.ly/3dnqgS8 for more actions you can take to reduce your church's energy consumption and carbon footprint.

More detailed advice is available on our website at www.newcastle.anglican.org/mission/environment.

St Paul's wins Eco Church award

By Carol Griffiths, PCC Secretary for St Paul's and member of Diocesan Environment Working Group

A few words since St Paul's Church, North Sunderland, qualified for the Bronze Eco Award in December.

IT started over 12 months ago, when prompted by the endless apocalyptic articles about climate change, two of us started to think what we could do to make a difference in St Paul's.

We discovered the **Eco Church** website, started to work through the five sections - then Covid struck! A few months later, we completed the survey, got it signed off by our wardens and vicar, and received our first award.

So, what has changed en route?

We discovered we weren't always using printer paper from recyclable sources and we were probably paying over the odds for minimal use of water.

We started using the excellent 52 week Eco Tip list from Leeds Diocese (bit.ly/3jX1zxa) in our weekly updates, and have signed up for several of the excellent **Church of England Carbon Net Zero webinars** on various aspects of reducing our carbon footprint.

We also participated in Northumberland County Council's Climate Webinar, and are hoping to wild our extensive closed graveyard, or plant new trees or bulbs without affecting NCC liability to mow the area periodically.



> An example of a bug hotel made with wood, pine cones and bricks. A bug hotel has been installed in the vicarage garden

How you can support our Eco Church journey in prayer:

■ We have an ancient expensive boiler and need to focus on updating our heating system please pray that we can raise the funds for this.

■ Please prayerfully consider whether your parish too, could embark on the Eco Church journey. It is not difficult, but will prompt some soul searching and hopefully, change some set habits!

joined by Revd Anne Beverley, who in the last year has grown her church TikTok channel to more than 50K followers.

She'll be sharing how she grew the channel, her content creation tips, secrets to going viral and how she pastors a Christian and non-Christian audience through the platform.

The one-hour chat takes place on Friday 12 March from 11am-12pm and is relevant to anyone who wants to use their social media presence to reach new audiences.

Register at bit.ly/37n4Rox

How to TikTok

THE Church of England's Digital Team is running a webinar about Digital Evangelism on TikTok.

In the last year, we've seen bishops, vicars and Christian influencers go viral on TikTok, reaching a younger audience with Biblical truths. In this panel session, the Digital Team will be



Praying for the Earth

Revd Dr Rob Kelsey has published a book encouraging people to pray for our natural environment. In this edition of Link, Rob tells us more about his book and the message behind it.

PRAYING for the Earth: Remembering the Environment in our Prayers of Intercession was published by Sacristy Press on 1 February this year.

It is based on the conviction that all Christians should pray for the earth as a matter of course, not just on special occasions. It should be an ordinary, everyday thing to do.

Why should we pray for the earth?

■ The natural world is God's first love. In the story of creation in Genesis 1, God 'saw that it was good' before human beings arrived on the scene. If we love God, then we will love what he loves, and we naturally pray for those we love.

■ As Christians, we tend to think that God's salvation is all about us. But, in Genesis 9, God made his covenant with Noah and his family, and 'with every living creature that is on the earth'. We pray for the earth to help us know our own place in the bigger scheme of things, and to learn a less self-centred language.

■ We naturally pray for what we care about, and we naturally care more for what we pray about. Praying for the Earth is a spiritual exercise, by which we expand our horizon of care, and capacity for action.

We don't often hear prayers for the earth in church on a Sunday morning. Why is that? Perhaps because we struggle to find the right words, which is where my book comes in. It contains nearly 100 short prayers on a variety of environmental themes. They're divided up into sections.

First is a prayers for each day of the week, on themes that approximately equate to the days of creation in Genesis 1. Then there are two sets of prayers for each day of the month, again divided into approximately eight weeks' worth of prayers. Then there are prayers for different times of the church year, and prayers for other times of the year.

The idea is that whoever is leading the prayers of intercession on a Sunday morning might choose one of the prayers, and incorporate it, adapted as necessary, into whatever form of prayer they're using. The book

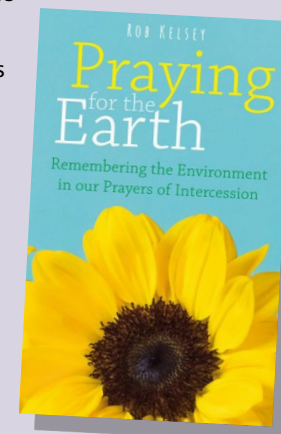
can, of course, also be used by individuals in their daily prayers, or groups of Christians whenever they meet to pray together.

I've tried to use ordinary, everyday forms of speech, so that the prayers don't sound high-flown. But I've also tried to use elegant turns of phrase, so that they don't sound mundane. My hope is that they might bear repeated usage.

The following prayer is suggested in the book for use during Lent:

In this time of abstinence and reflection, help us to confront our weaknesses in the wilderness and perceive our place in your great universe. We give thanks for the green shoots of your presence in the waste places of the world. May we learn new habits of holy living in our relationship with the earth.

Praying for the Earth is available to buy at www.sacristy.co.uk/books/ministry-resources/prayers-earth-environment



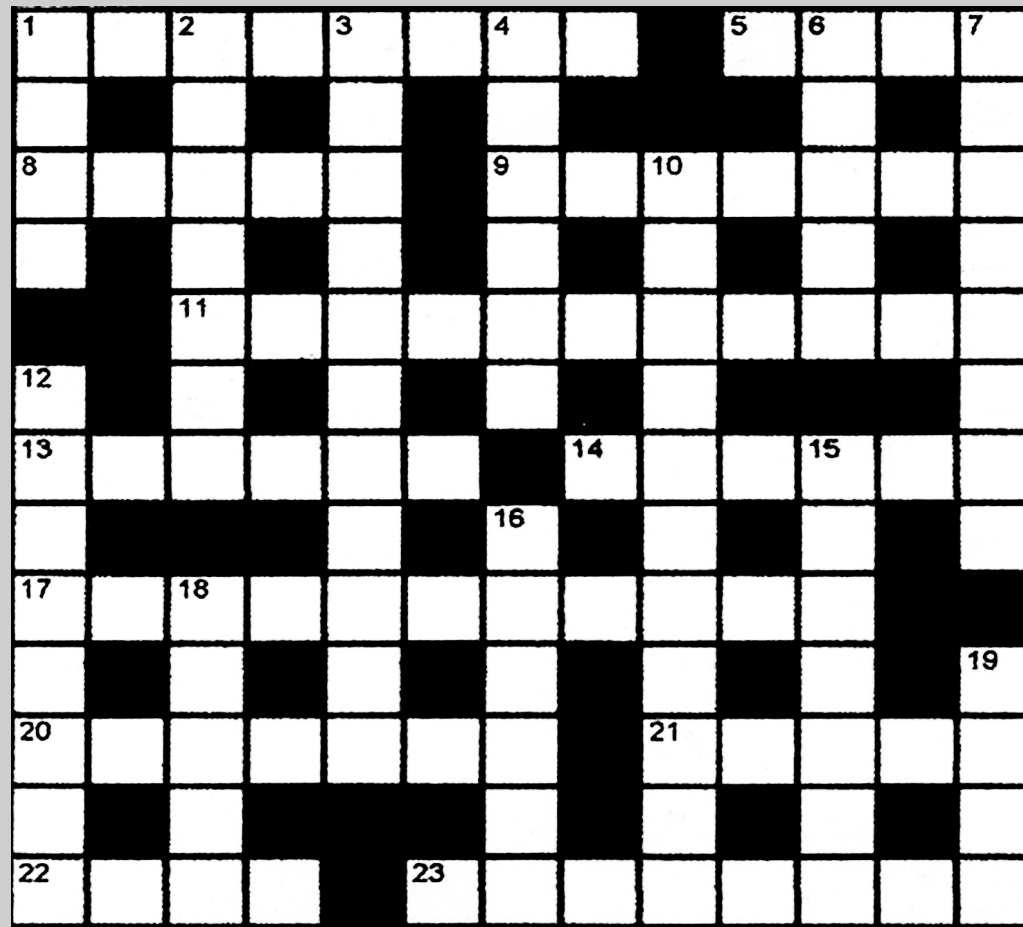
HAVE YOUR SAY

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 170** *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. Person who saves wild deer, half of them, with hesitation (8)
5. Some popular eastern region (4)
8. Follow mother's doctrine (5)
9. Boss, male, taking silver with hesitation (7)
11. Stingy drunk fellow first seen with journalist (5-6)
13. My dill is chopped up gently (6)
14. Opposed a poem (6)
17. Second sprite with coin embarrassed when not thinking of others (4-7)
20. Sudden whim of one male with peas (7)
21. Suffer at home with dog (5)
22. Joke about new group (4)
23. Large, they all moved in a dangerous way (8)

DOWN

1. Reportedly regretted being uncivil (4)
2. Woman soldier with volunteers left displaying information as numbers (7)
3. Low Church member leaving lace out (1)
4. Net I'm moving before end of day, showing hostility (6)
6. Correct ceremony being heard (5)
7. Shortened commercial about card game (8)
10. Ann, his rival, spilt cosmetic lacquer (4,7)
12. Wonderful, it's shattering (8)
15. Extremist ring leader, a woman, about 50 (7)
16. Girl, 10, initially entering extension (6)
18. Left at university, popular plant (5)
19. Offer intercessions for pair with a head of year (4)

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD 169

- ACROSS: 1. Archbishop
8. Gentile 9. Faith 10. Lark
11. Clerical 13. Pagan
14. Nonet 16. Rational
17. Mess 20. Storm 21. Theatre
22. All-rounder
DOWN: 1. Angel
2. Congregation 3. Bait
4. Spells 5. Offering
6. Discontented
7. Chalet 12. Informal
13. Parish 15. Easter
18. Steer 19. Peru

FOLLOWING IN MY GRANDMOTHER'S FOOTSTEPS?

THIS morning I went for a walk along the lane outside my door. The wind had scoured the fields and dumped the snow on the lane in great, folded drifts. Some were knee high and some were more like waist high. It was exciting for a town-girl.

Someone had been out before me and I could see a route through and around the drifts picked out by footprints. At times I could, like the Page, step into the footprints. Even so it was not an easy walk.

Behind me, in the distance I could see the snow plough making its way along my lane.

On my way home I suddenly realised that the fields were almost clear of snow and I could have walked an easier route. I had chosen to follow the footsteps because, well ... why? Because it was easier to follow in someone else's footsteps than pick my own way around the drifts or even to look around me to see what other choices I might have?

I remembered an old 'saw' passed down generations of my family: "when you reach the end of your tether, tie on another piece".

As a child I understood this to mean that when you feel you do not have the energy or emotional reserves to continue you must simply rise to the challenge, find some something from somewhere (unspecified)

Wellbeing

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



and carry on anyway. And that is what I tried to do.

I mentioned this one day to a colleague. I got a blank look: "what does that mean?". I thought it was obvious but apparently not and when I explained she followed up with the killer question: "why?".

In general, I dislike the "why?" question because it puts people on the defensive and demands justification. In this case it was a good one to ask me: "why would you think that?".

Again, I thought the answer was blindingly obvious but when I tried to explain, I could not; my explanation sounded nonsensical even to me.

I started to remember decisions I had

made believing that all I could do was "tie on another piece" and I just had to put up with the situation. I had lost sight of choices and options and everything that I could have done to make a difference to my situation. Instead, I ploughed on - in someone else's footsteps.

How did this happen? I had clearly swallowed the saying lock-stock-and-barrel without thinking whether it made any sense for me, here and now.

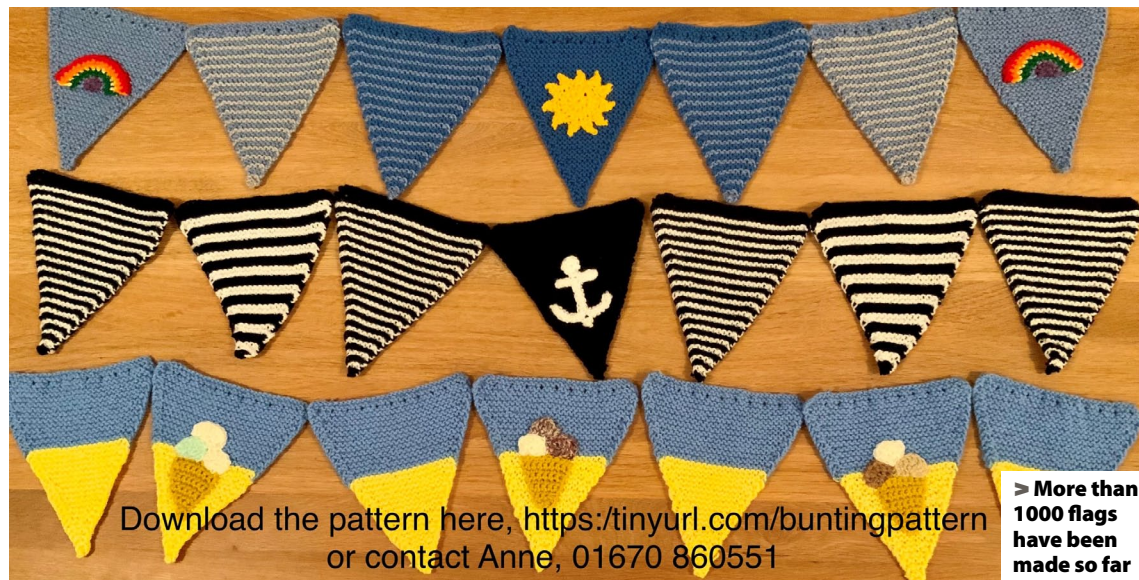
Where had it come from? Well, my grandmother as a young woman found herself in circumstances where she was the sole provider for two children. At that time, she had limited options available to her. She did her best and when necessary she "tied on another piece".

Roll forward to a different time, a different place and a different life, my life. My grandmother did not create her mantra for me. It was for her to help her in her circumstances. I have learned from her endurance and persistence, but my circumstances are different, and I have options that she did not.

There are very few situations where I must just "tie on another piece"; instead, I can exercise choice.

I can still plough on following the footprints in the snow or I can wander across the field, but that is my choice.

Putting the flags out



By Anne Baxter

WHY is the Parish of Cresswell and Lynemouth 'Putting the Flags Out' with the help of Mixed Ecology Learning Programme (MELP)?

Mina Munns, Dianne Cook and Anne Baxter from the parish are attending a Mixed Ecology Learning Programme pilot course via Zoom from home. 'Homework' and lockdown has challenged us to look at different ways to engage with the community and bring the villages together.

Walking between the villages looking for 'desire lines' and holding open 'chaordic space', both terms from session two, the idea to link Lynemouth and

Ellington with flags dropped into place and at the end of the walk when the chaotic thoughts were put into order the rest was easy.

Patterns were found and samples knitted and crochet, the request for help went out via Facebook pages and were shared with family and friends. The dark winter lockdown days have been occupied with making flags and so far, we have over 1000.

When we are able we will collect the flags and there will be an open invitation to coffee and cake in return for threading the flags. If we have enough we will link Lynemouth to Ellington (0.7 miles) for a day and encourage people to walk between, with refreshments

at each end. If not, MELP has encouraged us to be brave and persistent but not to worry if we fail, the flags will decorate a favourite building in each village.

Some flags will be kept for special occasion, others will be used for lap blankets and twiddle muffs. We will welcome people from the villages to join in with the activity of making them and put into practice the MELP sessions where we considered listening and being hosts and guests.

If you would like to help by making flags please check our Facebook page 'The Parish Churches of Cresswell and Lynemouth'.

#LiveLent 2021

THE Church of England's Lent resources theme for 2021, building on the success of recent years, is entitled #LiveLent: God's Story, Our Story.

It is based on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book for 2021, *Living His Story* by Hannah Steele, published in November by SPCK.

Both the book and the accompanying daily reflections encourage all Christians to think about their calling, how to share their faith and reflect on the difference Christ makes in our lives.

We witness to God's story and the impact this has made to our story so that others might also find their story taking on new meaning in the light of God's love.

While the current restrictions on daily life necessitated by the



pandemic present significant challenges, the suffering and isolation many continue to face make the need for us to share God's love with our communities greater than ever.

Rather than just being a Lenten discipline, this year's #LiveLent is a joyful invitation to make witness a normal part of the Christian life, the natural overflow of a life lived in devotion to Christ.

From Ash Wednesday (17 February) to Easter Sunday (4 April), there will be six reflections for each week, written by Stephen Hance, the Church of England's National Lead for Evangelism and Witness.

Each reflection will include a short passage from the Bible, a brief exploration of the reading, and a prayer. Additionally, each week will have a unifying theme and an action to be taken during the week.

The daily reflections are available through a booklet available to buy from Church House Publishing, as well as a free app, emails, audio and through the Church of England's social media accounts.

To order printed copies of the booklet and to sign up to the daily reflections, visit www.churchofengland.org

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.



HERE BE DRAGONS

WHEN I was growing up, I owned a bookmark with a cartoon of a would-be sculptor either looking bemusedly at the Henry-Moore-esque form appearing from a mound of rubble before him, or looking down, chisel in hand, at a booklet in the other.

The caption read, 'For best results, follow the maker's instructions'. I was reminded of this, earlier this evening, when, as per the instructions, I heated the grill to maximum and popped the two pots of supermarket crème brûlée as close to the elements as I could for the designated 'five minutes'.

At four and a half minutes, I returned to check on the pudding and found one of the pots almost completely on fire. In my haste to get things going, I had ignored both my own feeling of 'five minutes seems like an awfully long time' and the all-important phrase in those blessed instructions 'or until the caramel layer turns a dark, golden brown'. Thankfully, no significant damage was done and very little food was wasted.

I believe the bookmark had been bought at a Christian bookshop and had, on the reverse, a reference to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 ('All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, et c.') or another similar verse, setting up the idea that the Bible is some sort of holy instruction manual and, if we can only follow the rules, then everything will work out for the best.

In my youth, another, similar metaphor was popular - that the Bible was a map that would guide us through life, if only we could follow it correctly. And, as my life continued to not be noticeably transformed from glory into glory, I often wondered if, in my haste to get on with things, I'd only read half the instructions.

I think it was probably more that I hadn't orientated the map correctly. And more importantly, that it was the wrong kind of map altogether. I don't believe the Bible is a road map through life - it's not an A-Z with clear route from birth to death to afterlife that only gets difficult when the centrefold obscures a turn in the road. For starters, I believe that idea of the scale of the map is wrong - a book mostly written over two thousand years ago can't contain clear and detailed instructions for every eventuality of life today, so broader strokes must have been used in its drafting. But most of all, it's that the Bible is not a map designed to get us from one end of life to the other at all, but one designed to point us towards God, with the Gospels being the magnified, illuminated sections, telling us clearly that wherever else we may find God, he can best be found in the living, breathing person of Jesus. Jesus, God loving us so much that he came to seek and save us whilst we were still lost and who provides us with the eternally guiding compass of 'Love God with your heart and soul and mind and strength - and love your neighbours as yourself'.

Final Covid Cash Recovery courses

TOGETHER Newcastle has announced final dates for its free Covid Cash Recovery courses.

In this third period of lockdown, with many changes to government policy, and increasing levels of need in our communities, the course is more important than ever in equipping people to support those who are experiencing financial hardship at this time.

These stand-alone, comprehensive, regularly updated online webinar sessions cover everything from general entitlements, rights, government and charitable support, to budgeting, help with bills, loans, debt, and money strategies for making it through these next few months.

And, once trained, participants have access to the course handbook and up-to-date resources.

The online Covid Cash Recovery Train the Trainer sessions take place from 10am - 12.30pm on the following dates:

- Wednesday, 3 March
- Tuesday, 16 March
- Wednesday, 31 March

Book your place at www.together-newcastle.org/whats-new/covid-cash-course

Together Newcastle can also offer a bespoke course if you have six or more people to train as a group. Please email kerry.crellin@together-newcastle.org for further information or to register interest in future courses.



Thy Kingdom Come 2021



MORE than 200 video resources are already available for parishes, churches and individuals who would like to take part in Thy Kingdom Come 2021.

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

What started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer.

The free videos, available on YouTube and Vimeo, include video reflections from senior church leaders including Archbishop Justin Welby, Pastor Agu, Archbishop Angaelos, Cardinal Vincent Nichols and organisations such as Hope UK and Youth For Christ.

There are also a number of resources for churches, families and individuals from previous years on the Thy Kingdom Come website including two podcast series from Professor NT Wright, The Family Prayer Adventure Podcast series and Map.

The resources are available at thykingdomcome.global

“How long will hatred, greed and self-interest fuel suffering, injustice, and destruction? / Here I stand God, yet knowing the standing is not enough – I need to act.”

THESE words of Bishop Rachel Treweek, the first female diocesan bishop in the Church of England, are taken from a new book to be published in March to mark Christian Aid's 75th anniversary.

Rage & Hope: 75 Prayers for a Better World is a collection of prayers and reflections from 75 Christian leaders, activists, writers and theologians from all over the world.

From climate injustice to Black Lives Matter to violence against women, from discrimination against Dalits in India to the coronavirus pandemic; from extreme poverty in Burundi to inequality in Myanmar, the book aims to inspire and bring hope to its readers.

With a foreword by one of the world's leading theologians – US Bible scholar Walter Brueggemann – the book also includes prayers from Bishop Paul Butler, Archbishop Matthew Man-Oso Ndagoso, the Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna, writer Rhidian Brook, priest Winnie Varghese and theologian Robert Beckford.

Published by SPCK, Rage & Hope also includes a prayer from Dr Rowan Williams, chair of Christian Aid and the former Archbishop of Canterbury.

Christian Aid's work began in 1945, when it was founded by British and Irish churches to help refugees following the Second World War.

Since then, the organisation has provided humanitarian relief and long-term development support for poor communities worldwide, while highlighting suffering, tackling injustice and championing people's rights.

Christian Aid's history includes making a difference in crises such as the Biafra war, advising Martin Luther King during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, campaigning to make poverty history in the 2000s and standing together with those facing the full force of climate injustice in countries around the

Rage and Hope

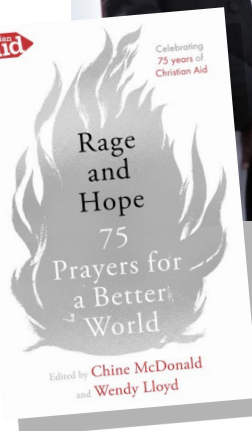
By Helen Cunningham, Church Engagement & Fundraising Officer (North East & Cumbria)

christian aid



➤ Above, Amanda Mukwashi, CEO of Christian Aid and inset left, Rage & Hope is out in March.

Main Picture: Christian Aid / Diarmuid Mitchell



world today.

Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, Christian Aid's chief executive, has contributed to the book, as well as the previous three CEOs Loretta Minghella, Daleep Mukarji and Michael Taylor – whose combined leadership of the organisation spans 30 of its 75-year history.

As Christian Aid's head of public engagement Chine McDonald, who co-edited the book with colleague Wendy Lloyd, writes in the book's introduction: “There are not many books on prayer that straddle the line between prayers of rage and lament, and those of hope.

“In 75 years of Christian Aid's work, we have seen the best of humanity and the worst of it; we have seen that the world is a broken place – its systems unjust and unfair – and yet through it all we have seen glimmers of hope.

“We believe that our Christian faith should compel each and every one of us to pray authentic prayers to a God who hears us; who invites us to pour out our rage and lament and have the audacity to hope that God is able to do the impossible.”

And as Elizabeth Neep, Senior Commissioning Editor at SPCK, says: “From the first time we heard about the likelihood of a book to mark the 75th Anniversary of Christian Aid, we knew it was something we wanted to be a part of. Not only has the work of Christian Aid been a constant source of inspiration for our team here, but a prayer book that draws together voices from across the world and provides words to process our laments and set our hearts upon hope feels like the very thing we need as we seek to live out our faith both this year and in the years to come.”

■ **Rage & Hope: 75 Prayers for a Better World is out on 18 March and available to order at www.spckpublishing.co.uk/rage-and-hope**

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 16 March | 12-1pm and Tuesday 27 April | 4-5pm

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

Thursday 11 March | 4-5pm and Tuesday 13 April | 12-1pm

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

This webinar will include heat pumps,



ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

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.

Solar PV Panels

Tuesday 23 March | 6-7pm

This webinar will give you an introduction to solar PV panel technology, its applications, usage, battery storage and on-going benefits. As well as the council planning and DAC application and approval processes. Speaker: Guy Hewitt from Treadlighter.

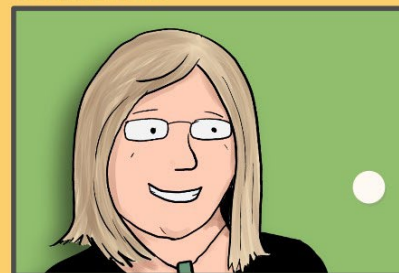
For more information and to find out how to register, visit bit.ly/3kZetj and scroll down to 'Webinars on low carbon solutions – heating, lighting, solar and more'.

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