

# Ponteland Methodist Church

# Cornerstone



**April 2019**

## REGULAR CHURCH ACTIVITIES

The regular weekly activities within the church are outlined below.  
There are phone numbers given to ring if you need further information.

### SUNDAY

- 10.00am The Bridge
- 10.00am Morning Service and Sunday Club
- 6.30pm Evening Service
- Holy Communion, morning and evening as announced

### MONDAY

- 1.15pm Prayers
- 1.30pm Carpet Bowls
- 2.00pm Open Door
- 2.00pm Open Door Bible Study (2nd & 4th Monday)

### TUESDAY

- 2.30pm Women's Fellowship (fortnightly)
- 5.45pm Boys' Brigade - Anchor Boys (term time only)
- 7.00pm Boys' Brigade - Junior/Company sections

### WEDNESDAY

- 5.45pm Girls' Brigade - Explorers (term time only)
- 6.00pm Girls' Brigade - Junior/Company sections

### THURSDAY

- 9.30am Toddler Thursday (term time only)
- 7.30pm Women's Focus (fortnightly)
- 7.30pm Men's Forum (monthly)

### FRIDAY

- 7.30pm Bridge Prayer meeting (monthly)
- 7.30pm Carpet Bowls

### SATURDAY

- 9.30am Meanders (fortnightly, tel: 871844)
  - 10.00am Mini-Meanders (monthly, tel: 821845)
- For details of House groups phone Chris Cogan on 0191 271 2637

**Minister:** Rev Jona Sewell  
61 Cheviot View, Ponteland, NE20 9BH. Tel: 822057  
E-mail: revjsewell@gmail.com

Church website <http://www.ponteland-methodist-church.org.uk/>

## MINISTER'S LETTER

Holy week and Easter are upon us again. This is such an important week in the Christian calendar where we remember the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. We are thankful that because of this week we can know forgiveness, find wholeness, enjoy peace and have the promise of eternal life in God.

However, the story of Holy week and Easter is about so much more than the promise of everlasting life, as wonderful as that is! I believe that it also is the template for the Christian journey, where we are asked to “put to death whatever belongs to the earthly nature” (Colossians 3:5). I believe what Paul means by this is that we must be willing to die to our own selfishness, our own ego, our own desire to be in control, our tendency to manipulate. We must be willing to put to death the sinfulness that takes us from God. Dying can be painful, just as Jesus suffered, but through such death, resurrection comes. We are transformed into his likeness. We become more like Him in this world; more peaceful, generous, gracious, loving, compassionate, forgiving. We become brighter lights in this world.

I truly believe if the Church as an institution is ever to grow it needs to get beyond the petty legalism which so often stifles growth and rediscover the meaning of dying and rising with Christ. This Easter may we be a people who have the courage to follow Christ through Calvary, the tomb and resurrection, so that we might better serve and bear witness to Him.

Have a great Easter.

God Bless

*Jong*

## EASTER OFFERING FOR FOUR HOMES OF MERCY

Four Homes of Mercy, situated just outside of Bethany, is one of the projects supported by the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem.

In 1940 a Christian Arab woman, Katherine Siksek, set up four projects to improve care for children and adults with physical or learning disabilities. The service provision has changed over time and whilst now only one project remains, it still carries the name Four Homes of Mercy.



Today, Four Homes is a residential home for 85 people with moderate to severe learning and physical disabilities. Care is divided into sections for men, women and children, with a rehabilitation section for services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy and recreational activities.

Four Homes receives very limited funding from the Pal-

estinian Authority and relies heavily on donations from international supporters. The project is critically short of funds and staffing levels are consequently low. Many staff are not paid each month and, as a result of the shortages of funding, volunteers take on much of the care. The rehabilitation section is only staffed for short periods of time and not open every day. The physiotherapy section relies heavily on students rather than on qualified staff.

In Palestine, the culture relating to those with physical and/or learning disabilities is very different to that which exists in the UK. There is still a stigma attached to families who have a disabled child, so many children and adults with additional needs are kept hidden in family homes. There is very little service provision in the West Bank and Gaza and the residents of Four Homes are the very few who do receive help directed at them and their needs. Without Four Homes, the residents would face considerably worse situations in the wider community.

Despite the constraints on the service and the difficulties staffing Four Homes, there is a warm sense of care, as summed up by one of the employees who said of the residents, “I love them from the inside.”

The collections from services on Easter Sunday (morning and evening) will be donated to Four Homes of Mercy. Blue envelopes for church giving can be put in the collection as normal.

**Bev**

### **ABRAHAM BEN ISSACHAR’S STORY**

I left the Community not long ago. Even at Qumran we had heard of the latest outrage by the so-called High Priest and his clique. The news of the death of Jesus of Nazareth made me finally revolt against the excessive strictures of the Priestly Guardian and his exclusiveness.

You see, we had met Jesus even before his open campaign for repentance, love and righteousness. Like him, we rejected the worldly policies of Jerusalem under Annas and Caiaphas; our community ruled that Jerusalem was in error – Sons of Darkness, we called them, always truckling to the heathen Empire and showing a hollow piety. In those days I followed our Guardian in the strict rule of God’s Law.

John bar Zachariah, the man they called ‘The Baptist’, had spent much of his life from teenage on the edges of our Community in the desert. Although he had been baptised by us he never fully joined or wore the pure white clothes of the elect: though a priest’s son, he always wore the clothes of the very poor – rough camel-hair tunic with a bit of old rope round his waist. I don’t remember him ever eating with us, but he often came for hours to read the Holy Scripture in our library; very fond of the prophecies of Isaiah, was John. His prophetic ministry burst on the world quite suddenly and spread like wildfire not only through Judea, but through our scattered people everywhere in the world.

Jesus, on the other hand, we heard was in the desert only for a month or a bit more. We knew he was nearby from travellers’ tittle-tattle, but we saw little of him, though he did come two or

three times to Qumran to study the Holy books and we judged him to be a truly holy seeker after truth and considered ourselves to be rightful guardians and teachers of such. Mostly he was out in the wilder parts by himself alone. We could tell that he was wrestling in his mind; quite tortured he seemed sometimes, and then he would come to our community for another session with the Fifth Book of Moses. For a countryman with only local synagogue teaching he had a fine mind and was well studied in the Word of God.

Of course, when Jesus went back to Galilee and then appeared in Judea, castigating the Jerusalem authorities, we at Qumran didn't know what to make of him. We agreed that the Jerusalem priests and scribes were in gross error, but we heard that Jesus, this carpenter from the sticks as we thought of him, had turned rabbi and was setting his revelation above the Law itself! The community were troubled about what they heard and were inclined to think him blasphemous.

However, some of us sneaked off to the City to find out what was going on. John bar Zachariah had turned political and paid the price for it, but this man was different. His understanding of love above law caught my heart. I saw his deeds of love, his good news of forgiveness from the heart of God, the truths of the prophecies being demonstrated with love and power; I was captivated. Abandoning Qumran, I moved to Judea. The barbaric crucifixion of a godly man came as a spur to decision. I sought out his followers, no easy task straight after that monstrous crime, and found there the living truth of a God who suffers and triumphs in love, who is Love. Now I belong to a new community, a community of love in action.

**John M Gill**

### **WHAT'S THE FORECAST ?**

Wondering what will come our way  
Rain, wind showers....yet another unsettled day  
But help us on, spreading love to all;  
and teaching us to pray  
with our penitent heart,  
playing our small but important part.

**Noreen Green**

## QUESTIONS ABOUT WORSHIP

At our recent special joint service we asked the following questions about the future of our worship:

### General Questions

1. What benefits to our worship do you see in bringing the two congregations together in one service?
2. As we look to bring the morning congregations together in one service, what is it that enriches worship in
  - The Bridge
  - Traditional Worshipthat you feel must not be lost?
3. As we look to bring the morning congregations together in one service, what must we avoid doing?
4. What concerns do you have about our worship as we look to bring the morning congregations together in one service?

### Welcome

1. What is it about the greeting, the building, and the environment that makes you feel welcome?
2. What are the potential barriers which could affect our welcome?
3. As we look to bring the morning congregations together in one service, how can we be more welcoming for all ages?  
*(We may wish to consider families)*

### Music and Singing

1. What is it about music and singing in
  - The Bridge
  - Traditional Worshipthat helps you worship God?
2. As we look to bring the morning congregations together in one service, what concerns do you have about music and singing?
3. As we look to bring the morning congregations together in one service, what can we do with our music and singing to further enrich our worship?

I am deeply thankful for everyone who took part and contributed

that morning but recognise that some people were unable to make it, while others might wish to add more having had additional time and space to prayerfully reflect. The discussion is ongoing and these questions remain open. Should you wish to contribute further then please either leave your response(s) in my pigeon-hole at Church or email them, or anything you wish to add, to me at [revjsewell@gmail.com](mailto:revjsewell@gmail.com)  
Every Blessing,

**Jona**

## **VILLAGE NEWS**

### **Ponteland Middle School**

Next year this school is to convert to a primary school following consultation with staff and parents. This is only a proposal at present.

### **Dissington Garden Village**

Lugano Property has dropped its High Court action against Northumberland CC.

### **Building adjoining Rialto Restaurant**

Work has at last begun to restore the building at the side of Rialto. Ponteland Town Council say the plan is to have a small shop at ground level and an office on first floor.

### **Free-range egg production unit Westcotes Farm, north west of Ponteland**

This unit for 32,000 birds plus and egg packing unit has been approved.

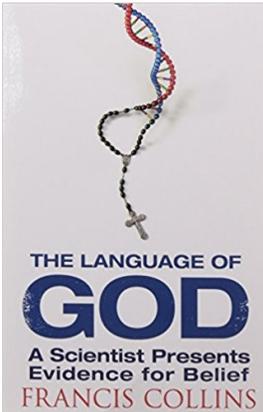
### **Proposal for coal surface mine on land north of Throckley, south of Stamfordham Road (B6324) and east of Ponteland Road (B6323)**

Banks Mining and Ibstock Brick have made an application to Newcastle City Council and Northumberland CC for a surface mine for the extraction of up to 1.2 million tonnes of coal and fireclay. Comments by 23rd April.

### **Belsay Hall**

English Heritage have made a planning application for a number of works at Belsay Hall. Repairs are needed—a request is made to convert the Coach House to a new café, with a new play area, alterations to the main WC block and alterations to existing paths.

**Jennifer Hardy**



## THE LANGUAGE OF GOD

At the beginning of this millennium, Dr Frances Collins was leading the international human Genome Project in the USA. His remarkable scientific work was recognised world-wide and was the means by which he moved through agnosticism to atheism to Christianity.

Dr Collins found the joy of his Christian faith as he discovered and deciphered the code of life, calling it God's instruction book of life, namely DNA.

The Language of God, the autobiography he subsequently wrote, is a well articulated, remarkably insightful book which I, as a non scientist (though fascinated by science) highly recommend. The author's balanced depth of religious conviction with his portrayal of an ingenious universe bring science and God into rich harmony and make the book a valuable and compelling read.

Of his goal in writing it, Dr Collins explains, 'There is no conflict in being a rigorous scientist and a person who believes in a God who takes a personal interest in each one of us. Science's domain is to explore nature. God's domain is in the spiritual world; a realm not possible to explore with the tools and language of science - it must be examined with the heart, the mind and the soul - and the mind must find a way to embrace both realms'.

And so he writes of the origins of the Universe, interchangeable matter and energy, intelligent design, the development of life on Earth, the deciphering of our genetic code, to world views and our human doubts (which he points out are a natural part of faith) and the moral and ethical issues of our present day.

It is available on Kindle, published by Pocket Books or can be purchased as a paper-back for £8.99.

If you would prefer to borrow my copy, please let me know. I will be delighted to lend it to you.

**Isobel Hindle**

## LIVING CHRISTIANITY IN THE HOLY LAND TOUR 14-24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2019

Hello Everyone just wanted to share with you some of the many activities and experiences from my recent trip to The Holy Land at the end of February. Here is our group all together just outside the Old City Jerusalem Walls Jaffa Gate with our driver Sammy and group leaders John and Angleena. It was sunny most of the days but surprisingly cold especially at night, hence we have all well wrapped up!



Not having met many of the others in the group it didn't take long to feel comfortable and at ease. We stayed at the Bethlehem Bible College inside the West Bank and the first obstacle to encounter was the separation barrier! For those of us who don't know I'll explain: it is a concrete wall which separates the West Bank and been in existence

for the last 15 years. We met and chatted with lots of Palestinian Christians where this barrier has prevented them from accessing their property, business, family and made significant restriction on their lives. I was blown away by their attitude of grace and humility, stamina and courage in the face of such adversity. We also visited Palestinian villages and farms where the same restriction was evident, including mains water being cut off to over 12 Palestine villages outside the City of Hebron. I will never again complain about watering my garden after a day at work; I shall think of Dawood and family operating a fruit farm, vineyards and trees with no access to mains water or mains electricity. I may add that Israeli settlements not more than 800 metres away do have mains water, power etc, it was quite heartbreaking to see first-hand the division, and fear that exists in the Birthplace of our Lord Jesus.

Some of the highlights of the trip: we visited The Mount of Olives on our first day and walked down to the Church of Nations, Garden of Gethsemane. The Shepherds Fields and the Tent of Nations Beit Sahour West Bethlehem on our second day, attended St Andrews Church in Jerusalem for Sunday morning

Worship and then walked the 'Via Dolorosa' using the script to prayer at each station from Sabeel Ministries praying for 'peace and reconciliation' finishing up at the church of The Holy Sepulchre and then enjoyed an authentic evening meal at the homes of Palestinian family. I nearly signed up Julia my Daughter in marriage to a lovely young man by the name of Rami who was very warm, friendly and GOOD LOOKING I'm sure she would like him! He thought it very amusing.



On Monday we spent some of the day with refugees at the Wi-AM Refugee centre where over 2000 families live in very close proximity with little access to mains services and water, learning about the conflict over the land which has led to present-day circum-

stances and occupation. They presented us with a very real picture of the difficulties and struggles they face daily and then gave us an overwhelming generous lunch, given they had limited resources – food, water, electricity I was amazed at how they had even managed to provide it. I came away thinking what a resourceful people they are. The very basic community kitchen had a large gas ring burner set on the floor supplied by gas cylinders and one very large cooking pot!

We visited Hope School, Beit Jala providing top quality education for Youths in Palestine and Promoting 'God is Love'. We were also excited to hear of the Principal's new plans for affordable community housing. Let's hope and pray he obtains Israeli planning permission to build them.

Mid-week we took a tour up to Ibillin Northern Israel outside of the West Bank near Nazareth through the Jordan Valley Desert to Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee where we stayed for two days at the Ibillin Guest House. We learned about the water shortages and how only 3% of the River Jordan now flows into the Dead Sea. The food was all home-cooked, authentic fayre and so delicious I offered to bring home the cook and she was very happy to oblige! We met the patron of the Guest House and School, Abuna Elias Chacour, proposed for the Nobel Peace Prize three times for his works promoting Peace and Reconcilia-

tion Middle East Conflict. His saintly words of wisdom I will not forget quoting -

‘The Chosen People, chosen to be a light to all Nations not an oppression to another Nation. I tell the children you were not born a Christian, a Muslim or a Jew, you were born a child in the image of God. Why should you be Pro-Israel when God has called you to be Pro-Justice? He is the Father of Many Nations’. Saturday we visited Hebron where the FRICTION between Palestinian residents and Jewish Settlers seems at its highest living in such close proximity. In this city there are no-go areas for both sides of the community and our guide had to leave us for some of the journey on foot where we walked along a derelict part of the market which had been cleared out after prior conflict. We did however have to enter a Jewish Household to turn off the smoke alarm - being a Sabbath they weren’t able to do it themselves and it had been driving them all mad all morning, they were very grateful.

My experience of the Holy Land was not what I’d expected. I had gone with some knowledge of the conflict and occupation but nothing could prepare you for what’s happening over there. It is my sincere wish that we as a collective of the Methodist Church will continue to seek and pray for ‘Peace with Justice’ in Israel Palestine and for the safety of those working there to that effect.

**Gaye Templeton**

### **QUOTES FROM SCHOOLS**

We've had a great morning at Methodist Church where we went on our Easter Journey. We discussed the, main events of Holy Week and the importance of Easter. Thank you to all of the volunteers at the Church for their time. **Darras Hall Primary**

Thank you for all your hard work and your welcome to Church today. We have had an amazing Easter Journey and the children have loved it. **Ponteland Primary**

Year 5 visited Methodist Church and through role play and story telling the children experienced the Easter Story. These children will be sharing their experiences with the rest of their classmates in forthcoming RE lessons. A huge thank you to Alison Maynard for this opportunity. **Ponteland Community Middle School.**

## HELLO FROM ALISON

Wow!!! What a week we have just had!! It has been a very busy and extremely exciting time. We have welcomed 197 children to our Church to participate in the Easter Journey. We have had fantastic feedback from the schools, including being put on their twitter feeds, as they took the journey through Holy Week. The children all behaved impeccably and were real ambassadors for their individual schools.

I have included some photos from the week so that you can share in our excitement. This event could not have happened without the huge amount of help offered by those in the Church. I'd like to say a HUGE THANK YOU to all who helped in setting up, taking down, acting, supplying, taking photos and generally escorting the groups around the journey. I could not have put this on without you and I feel God has blessed us through this experience.

Our next adventure comes on the 17<sup>th</sup> April, the Wednesday of Holy Week, when there will be a 'Family Easter Journey' happening between the hours of 4pm and 8pm. This is a self-led experience of around 8/9 stations where you can drop in any-time between the above hours and take your own journey through Holy Week reflecting and reading and thinking of how Jesus took the journey to the Cross. It has something for all ages at each station so from our youngest little people to our eldest in Church we can share in the journey. You can take as much or as little time as you need to go through and share in this experience. I hope you will find it a positive and helpful time as we approach the death and resurrection of Jesus on the Friday and Sunday.

Other work is ongoing with assemblies, lunch club and our uniformed Brigades and I am now beginning to organise and get my head around our upcoming Backpackers Holiday Club!! So busy times ahead which God is blessing and I am so grateful for all your prayers, love and support.

I wish you all a very blessed Easter time.  
Blessings, love and prayers

**Alison Maynard**



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PONTELAND  
COMMUNITY  
MIDDLE SCHOOL



ONTELAND  
PRIMARY  
SCHOOL



RRAS HALL  
PRIMARY  
SCHOOL



RICHARD COATES  
SCHOOL



## FAIRTRADE CHURCH

Ponteland Methodist Church has been a Fairtrade Church since 2006. As such it is committed to the following requirements, as laid down by the Fairtrade Foundation:

1. Using Fairtrade tea and coffee after services and in all meetings for which it has responsibility;
2. Moving forward on using other Fairtrade products such as sugar, biscuits and fruit;
3. Promoting Fairtrade during Fairtrade Fortnight and during the year through events, worship and other activities whenever possible.

In October, the Church Council requested that a meeting of interested people was held to discuss the way forward in meeting these requirements, especially in the light of the announcement of significant restructuring at Traidcraft plc. As a result proposals were brought to and passed by the February Church Council meeting as follows:

**This Church Council confirms that it does wish to continue with its Fairtrade Church status and agrees:**

1. That Traidcraft is PMC's preferred supplier of Fairtrade beverages and other agreed items;
2. To support a joint purchasing venture with other churches, administered via PMC;
3. That PMC is committed to only using Fairtrade tea and coffee in meetings for which it has responsibility and any donated items which are not Fairtrade will be passed on to the foodbank;
4. That Fairtrade handwash is used at PMC;
5. That any residual monies from PMC Fairtrade Group (*i.e. on winding up the arrangement to place twice-yearly orders from the Traidcraft catalogue*) held within church funds will be donated to Traidcraft Exchange;
6. That publicity etc costs for events promoting Fairtrade will be met from church funds;
7. That Traidcraft Exchange becomes a beneficiary of Care & Share when funds are distributed at the end of this year and in future years.

We continue to be thankful for the generous support for

Fairtrade over the years, both from individuals and from the church as a whole. The event at the Open Door during Fairtrade Fortnight this year resulted in £70 being donated to Traidcraft Exchange. The winding-up of the Fairtrade Group has resulted in a further donation of £165.72 being made. A new Traidcraft catalogue has just been issued and we will continue to review how PMC can support its work, over and above regular church orders of tea, coffee and now handwash. We draw your attention to Agreement 3 above, asking that everyone respects this commitment and that offers of non-fairtrade tea or coffee are politely re-directed to the foodbank.

This year's Fairtrade Fortnight focused on women cocoa farmers in Africa. It's fitting to leave the last words to one of them, Roisin Bekoin: 'The Fairtrade Premium has enabled us to advance our children, and also we use the Fairtrade Premium to build for the future'.

Thank you for your support in building a better future for people like Roisin.

**Andrew Gonnet and Bev**

### **A DAZZLING INTERLUDE**

SCENE 1. On the corner of the Church and Callerton Lane tottered an almost totally blind man of over 100 years old with his white stick. He said the setting sun was so glaring that he lost his bearings and was floundering. His home was up Callerton Lane and turning left into Mayfield Gardens. A girl or woman kindly came to his assistance and led him to his home. He says that she was from Columbia.

SCENE 2. Each week I join him and his wife for a meal and a chat. I provide the wine. Our conversation veered towards discussion on the difficulty of driving against bright winter sunshine. He told me of the incident described above. I said that that would probably be Tatiana and that last week I had been invited by her to tea and cake prior to her return to Columbia. She had touched our lives coincidentally – and I wondered how many more have been blessed by her stay with us at our Church.

**Alan Scott**

## NEWS OF SHADE AND NORTHERN KENYA



Dear friends,

Greetings from a hot and dusty Kenya. We are awaiting the start of the long rains...in the meantime people with livestock around Mt Nyiro are preoccupied finding grazing and water for their precious animals. As you can see in the photo, there are still some plains with grass/standing hay, sadly though, many of these grazing areas are not able to be used due to the threat of insecurity.



At the end of last year SHADE purchased 30 female goats and gave 15 needy families in the Loonjorin area two goats each. These goats were purchased with thanks to the present-aid scheme run by SHADE UK. Thanks to all who purchased a goat! They have been very gratefully received. Already

10 of the goats have produced young! As first offspring, when they are a little older, the kids will be passed on to other families in order to spread the benefit. Then subsequent offspring will be kept. Despite the current drought goats are doing well as they are drought-resistant and able to browse on shrubs and vegetation that sheep and cows do not.

Loonjorin Health Centre has been continuing well. It takes a dedicated nurse to always be on call but this is what makes such a difference to community health with people being able to be treated locally and quickly.

We are currently looking into the possibility of building some public toilets in Loonjorin as, apart from those at the Health Centre, there is currently no suitable public facility.

Please continue to remember the peoples of Samburu County in your prayers. Pray there will be good and timely rain with no insecurity. Pray that peace initiatives will be successful and that there will no raiding over the Easter period as holiday times are often an opportunistic time when cattle-raiding between neighbouring tribes occurs.

**Alison Lesingiran**

## BRIAN DAVIS



He was born in Blyth in 1937 to Harry and Alice; together with his brother Harry they were very much a working class family. Sport played a significant part in Brian's life and that influence was there from the early years; his grandfather rowed for England, his father signed for Liverpool FC but a serious injury meant he'd never fill his potential, and his brother was touted by Sunderland, Newcastle and Middlesbrough.

Brian himself played cricket to a very good standard; he was spotted at the age just nine playing cricket on the edge of Blyth's ground. One of the batsmen saw him and invited him over to the practice nets. He made his first team debut in the Northumberland Senior League aged 14. He also played for the county under 19s, under 21s, and even the under 25s, who he played for when he was just 15! He made appearances for the county seniors against the likes of Yorkshire seconds who, Brian was keen to point out, were every bit as good as Durham are today!

After finishing school and national service Brian's career was in insurance, joining North British Mercantile Insurance Co in 1953, and at 21 he was their youngest inspector.

He met Joyce through work as she worked in the renewal department. They married at Kingsley Terrace Methodist Church (off Westgate Road), in 1961, and bought their first home in Throckley.

Brian became an assistant manager at an insurance branch in Whitehaven, but wasn't there long and the family still lived in Throckley where Tony and Steve were born. Also in 1968 Brian got a job in Lincoln, working for Phoenix Insurance at this stage, and the family moved to Lincolnshire where Graeme was born. They missed the North East and moved back in 1974, moving

into their current home in Ponteland, with Brian working locally. Brian and Joyce's lives would take on a significant change after Christmas Eve 1982 when they attended St Mary's carol service; this event drew them into faith and Ponteland Methodist Church.

Brian's faith was not only strong, it was as faith should be: active and lived. At an early stage he was introduced to Every Day with Jesus daily readings by Jonathan and Karen Marks, and he kept the daily devotion up throughout his life. He knew his bible and was unafraid to talk about it and about faith in general – his faith was more than an academic or trust exercise; it was experienced and shared in the real world.

Brian was one of founder members of Ponteland Family Fellowship that ran for a number of years with speakers, study, prayer; he enjoyed trips to Pentecost Celebrations at Cliff College; he was one of founder members of the annual Bassenfell trip which Carol and Geoff Dent continue to organise, and has been a blessing to so many people; he was involved in setting up and running Alpha within the Church; he led the 'Links' bible study group for a number of years; he was a founder member of the prayer group which still meets today and helped bring in an ecumenical aspect to it.

He was also instrumental in starting up the group who go into Newcastle on Saturday evenings feeding people who are homeless and in need; he did this for 13 years. Brian also supported Cornerstone in Benwell, helped with collecting and delivering for the West End Foodbank, and was involved in the Clothes Bar in Lemington – collecting, delivering and sorting clothes.

In his spare time he loved the outdoors and being in God's creation; the hills, the coast, the garden – he took pleasure in them all. He also enjoyed walking and was a founder member of 'Footloose' men's walking group with David Butler, Geoff Dent and Steve Gray, walking fortnightly on a Wednesday. Brian really valued this group and the friendships made, describing the group as a 'real treasure in my life'.

He would listen to all kinds of music though Classic FM was often heard on the radio, and he loved sport – especially cricket and football. He was a Sunderland fan but liked to see all of the North East teams doing well, and played both squash and tennis

when he was younger.

Holidays were important, not just because of the break, but because of the family time as, through it all, Brian was devoted to his family. It was a real privilege to visit him in his final days with Joyce, Tony, Steve and Graeme all present; their love for each other and for Brian obvious!

His three passions of sport, faith and family were always clear, but through it all his love for God shone through.

**Jona Sewell**



**ramblers**  
at the heart of walking



**walking**  
for health

## **New Free Health Walks in Ponteland**



**Improve your health    Short walks, good paths**  
**Meet new friends      Regular weekly exercise**

**Every Tues at 10:30am at the Leisure Centre**  
Walks start Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019

**Short Walks, easy terrain, 60 to 90 minutes**  
Led by trained volunteers

To know more contact West Northumberland Health Walks Co-ordinator Lorraine Oliver on 01670 622368 or [loliver@activenorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:loliver@activenorthumberland.org.uk), or local walks leader Gordon Allan on 07936 135469. Assistance dogs only please.



## THE OPEN DOOR

I hope you like this twist on the traditional Simnel cake. Use whatever dried fruit and nuts you prefer.

**Judith**

### Chocolate Simnel Cake

120g margarine  
170g caster sugar  
90g sour cream  
140g SR flour  
½ tsp baking powder  
3 eggs  
30g cocoa powder  
100g ground almonds  
75g raisins  
220g white marzipan  
75g dark chocolate

Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan.

Prepare 2 sandwich tins.

Cream together the margarine and sugar. Beat in the eggs with a little flour.

Fold in the rest of the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, ground almonds and raisins.

Divide the mixture between the 2 tins and bake for 20-25 mins.

When the cakes have cooled, make the icing.

Melt the chocolate over a pan of simmering water.

Cream together the butter and icing sugar. Add the melted chocolate. Use to sandwich the cakes together. Reserve some for the top of the cake.

Spread a thin layer of the icing over the top of the cake.

Roll out the marzipan and using the cake tin as a template cut out a circle of marzipan. Place this on the top of the cake.

Use the offcut marzipan to roll into balls.

Melt the 75g of chocolate. Take a ball on a fork and dip it into the chocolate.

Place on a sheet of baking parchment. Repeat with the other balls.

When the chocolate has set use the left-over chocolate icing to stick the balls onto the cake.

### For the chocolate icing

70g dark chocolate  
120g butter  
100g icing sugar



## LION OR LAMB

After the glorious sunny and warm days we enjoyed during February, there was real apprehension as to whether March was to be just as bad as last year as the “Beast from the East” arrived at the end of February. So far despite the colourful show of primulas, tete-a-tete daffodils and tree blossom, our temperatures are just about average.

A couple of centuries ago, a Scottish meteorologist called Alexander Buchan began to observe that a distinct pattern of weather was forming and it's quite good fun to keep an eye on the dates and to see just how accurate they are! There are six cold spells and three warm spells.

These are:-

### Buchan's cold spells

Feb 9 to 14

April 11 to 14

May 9 to 14

June 29 to July 4

Aug 6 to 11

Nov 6 to 13

### Buchan's warm spells

July 12 to 18

Aug 12 to 15

Dec 3 to 14

All compiled prior to weather balloons or satellites!!

March is an interesting month as four important dates are within it. March 12th St Gregory's—the calendar was reformed by Gregory in 1582, March 17th St Patrick's Day and March 25th Lady Day—the day of the annunciation of the Virgin.

This year Lent commenced in March with Shrove Tuesday falling on the 5th. Shrove-tide were the days preceding Ash Wednesday in which confessions were made for Lent. It was an old custom to make pancakes on Shrove Tuesday to use up fats etc prior to the more abstemious period of Lent. Ash Wednesday received its name from sprinkling ashes on the head and is the first day of Lent.

Also we have Mothering Sunday on 31st March and British Summer Time begins. So longer lighter evenings are almost with us and everyone looks forward to Spring and Summer.

**Jean Tweedie**

## **GARDENING FOR APRIL 2019**

Welcome to British Summer Time and all the personal upsets that come with it. It may be the last time we change the clocks! After the warm weather of February we have been tempted with the dry days, but we have to remember the cold nights. Work has progressed quite well in the vegetable area of our garden but it is surprising how wet the soil is (writing 27 March). I put the Mantis tiller through two previously undisturbed beds today and it clogged up between the tillers.

The EU and UK Government have decreed that amateur gardeners will no longer have access to metaldehyde slug killers from June 2019. Dobbies took action and halved the price to get rid of stocks. Other slug killers appeared to have increased in price. “New to us” bug with a taste for beans has jumped into the top ten list of the worst garden pests. The “Southern green shield” shot up to sixth place on the Royal Horticultural Society’s annual ranking of the most bothersome insects, with the RHS claiming it had benefited from the warm summer last year. The pest is thought to have introduced to the UK from mainland Europe in the 2000s. It has a preference for vegetables – especially beans. The box tree caterpillar has topped the list for the last three years. Slugs and snails come in second place. Honey fungus is ranked as the worst disease.

Which? tested 25 peat-based and peat-free composts to discover the best for container-grown plants. Wyevale Multipurpose Compost with John Innes came top and their Multipurpose Compost was third (available at Heighley Gate), Bona Na Mona Growise Prof 5 AU Purpose Compost (never heard of them) came second. The top of the peat-free composts was Melcourt SylvaGrow with added John Innes followed by Melcourt SylvaGrow (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in the list). These are available at Cowells – I have never tried them but I am tempted with peat-based composts due to be phased out in 2 – 3 years time starting in 2020. To feed plants in pots I have normally used liquid feed but started adding controlled released granules to composts (mainly home mixed and utilising last year’s tomato compost mixed with other ingredients). I used controlled-release liberally in the planters with winter pansies and they are thriving very well so I am using it more when potting on this spring. Nurseries use it!

Camellias and magnolias seem to be at their best now and have come through a very mild winter very well. I had built up a collection of camellias in planters and lost them all over one winter. It would appear that both are more suited to planting in the ground but they do need shelter. Carol Klein writes this week in praise of C. Donation, relating to one that was planted 80 years ago saying that it is thought to be the source of every plant of Donation in the world (the correct Latin name is *Camellia williamsii* – Donation is a variety). Now most camellias available are hybrids derived from it. It is important not to position camellias east-facing to avoid early morning sun particularly in winter. The flower buds start developing early after flower drop so the plants need to be fed and well-watered through the summer. Magnolia is slow growing so that most that we see in full bloom have been in gardens for many years. There are lots of varieties available with some of the later flowering varieties more likely to escape the frost which causes damage once the flowers start to open. Magnolias do best in moist, well-drained soil, in full sun or lightly dappled shade. They prefer slightly acidic soil, so add plenty of ericaceous compost and coarse grit to the planting hole. Once established they should flower annually. If you haven't completed shrub pruning it is now "safe" – I hope to do so. Hydrangea macrophylla, hardy fuchsia, abutilon and deciduous ferns. Do not prune Acers and vines which are now coming into leaf – they will bleed a profusion of sap. Our vine is well advanced and I will soon have to take down the bubble wrap which is used for insulation in one greenhouse. Do not prune hedges as they are providing nesting sites for garden birds – so leave until late summer and you will only have to prune once!

Philadelphus and deutzia should be left to bloom and prune soon afterwards cutting out the oldest stems to ground level. Whatever shrubs you have in planters or in the ground ensure that they are fed. I use phosphate and potash in late March and top dress with nitrogen in April. Alternatively you could use Growmore (7:7:7) or organically fish blood and bone, ensuring that the feeds are washed in.

Good gardening in April and prepare some plants for the Church Plant Sale on 11 May.

**Syd Cowan**

## FAMILY NEWS

We pray for **Joyce Davis** and family also **Bob Swift** and family.

**Marjorie Scarlett** has had another stay in hospital.

**Jim Dobbs** has had a special birthday.

**Alison Bates** is going to have a special birthday to come

**Amy and Joe Higgins** have had a baby girl on Saturday 23 March. Her name is Evelyn Rose and she weighed in at 7lbs 11ozs. Mum, Dad and baby are all doing well. Grandma Rosemary Gray is very happy.

**Sheila Browell** is home after a time in hospital. We pray for her as she recovers.

**Alison and Alistair Stewart** are delighted to have a son Ewan Peter. Grandparents Irene Holmes and John Stewart are ecstatic.

### APRIL IN THE BRIDGE

The Bridge is a contemporary and informal gathering for worship that meets in the Church hall at 10am on Sunday mornings. All are welcome, including children, and there is opportunity for refreshments and fellowship both before and after the worship.

April Services are:

7th April - Jona Sewell with communion

14th April - *Joint service*

21st April - *Joint service*

28th April - Jona Sewell

A prayer evening is held on the second Friday monthly at Sue and Abraham Matthews's house. All are welcome. This month it will be Friday 12th April meeting at 7.30pm.

The Bridge is appropriate for the seekers, the questioners, the new to faith, the established in faith, the uncertain about faith, the doubters and the certain. Come along and find a welcome.



**Nigel Bates**

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

### April

- Thursday 11th 7.30pm Focus -The Butterfly Bridge - Noel Adamson  
Saturday 13th 9.30am Meander  
7.00pm Spring Concert with Graeme Danby  
Tuesday 16th 2.30pm Women's Fellowship - Easter Communion  
Thursday 25th 7.30pm Focus - Portugal Plus - Peter Aughton  
Saturday 27th 9.30am Meander  
10.00am Mini Meander  
Tuesday 30th 2.30pm Women's Fellowship

### May

- Sunday 5th 11.30am General Church Meeting



**PONTELAND METHODIST CHURCH**

# SPRING CONCERT

*Graeme and Valerie Danby with  
Voces University of Cumbria  
and Tim Jasper on piano*

**Saturday April 13th at 7pm**

**Ticket £7**

**Refreshment after the concert**



**Preachers  
April**

7th 10.00am Sewell (S)  
10.00am Wood  
6.30pm Woolley

14th 10.00am Sewell (AA P)  
6.30pm Wood

21st 10.00am Sewell (S AA)  
6.30pm Sewell (S)

28th 10.00am Sewell  
10.00am P Brooks  
6.30pm at *Westerhope*

**The BRIDGE**  
**@Ponteland**  
**methodist church**  
**Sundays**  
**10am**

Where everyone's welcome,  
because nobody's perfect,  
and anything's possible.

Upbeat music : kids activites  
Bible based : full of good stuff  
t: 01661 598 978 Find us on Facebook

**EASTER SERVICES**

Palm Sunday	14th April 10.00am- All Age Parade
Wednesday	17th April 4-8pm- Family Easter Journey
Maundy Thursday	18th April 7.00pm- Upper Room communion
Good Friday	19th April 10.00am- Good Friday worship 11.15am The raising of the cross - on the village green
Easter Day	21st April 8.30-9.30am- Celebrate Easter morning with breakfast 10.00am All Age Celebration of the Resurrection with communion

**From The Editors**

*Don't forget that copy for the May edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 26th April 2019**. The editor's email address is [andrew73anderson@gmail.com](mailto:andrew73anderson@gmail.com) . The editorial committee is Andy Anderson, Jennifer Hardy, Jona Sewell and Viv Whyte.*