

Ponteland Methodist Church Cornerstone



HAPPY NEW YEAR

December 2019/January 2020

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 Morning Service and Sunday Club
6.30pm Evening Service
Holy Communion, morning and evening as announced

MONDAY

12.15pm Prayers
1.30pm Carpet Bowls
1.00pm Open Door
2.00pm Open Door Bible Study (2nd & 4th Monday)

TUESDAY

2.30pm Women's Fellowship (fortnightly)
5.45pm Boys' Brigade - Anchor Boys
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 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
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Church website <http://www.ponteland-methodist-church.org.uk/>

MINISTER'S LETTER

There's an oft-used saying, 'It's better to give than receive'. On the surface it seems a very noble and selfless saying. Seen in its wider context in terms of not just the giving of gifts, but the giving of time and resources, it can be a wonderfully generous statement. The idea to give oneself to a person or for a cause is challenging, captivating and has the power to change lives. But the danger with this saying is that it can make receiving seem like a bad thing.

I wonder, have you ever received a gift that has moved you to tears? Have you received something that has communicated the sacrifice, thoughtfulness, or depth of affection or love which has left you feeling incredibly special or undeserving? Sometimes it really is better to receive!

And what about the gift of Jesus? How do we receive that gift? Do we see the story of the nativity as just that - a story? To be believed in, dissected and understood. Or do we see Him as a selfless and generous gift from the God who wants to communicate how precious and loved we are by him? Do we see it for what it is? The gift that speaks of God's sacrifice, love and passion for us, and a gift that speaks of God's desire to know us and to be known by us.

When received in the right spirit, with thankfulness, openness and humility, then the gift of Jesus can change us and draw us into a deeper awareness of who God is and our place in the world with Him. When it comes to Jesus, first and foremost, it really is better to receive.

How do you receive the gift of Jesus this Christmas?
God Bless



HELLO FROM ALISON

Dare I say it.....CHRISTMAS IS COMING.....

And so along with that comes lots of busyness, excitement and lots of joy!!!!

CHRISTMAS JOURNEY - happening between the 3rd and the 6th December when we will see around 120 children from both Richard Coates Primary School and Ponteland Primary School. This was an amazing event last year and the schools really enjoyed interacting with the Christmas Story. It was a real community outreach event and we hope this year will be just as successful. However we do still need volunteers so I'm hoping this magazine will be out in time for you to give me a shout or to sign up to help. We are setting up on the 3rd from 10am, delivering four sessions— two on Wednesday the 4th and two on Thursday the 5th and taking down the set on Friday the 6th. Sessions are at 10.30am and 1.30pm. Please come and help, we need puppeteers, a King, photographer and chaperones.

I continue to have input to both the Boys' Brigade and the Girls' Brigade. I am helping at Anchors and doing devotions for the older boys, please pray for the group, the leaders and the boys; they do need some other helpers so if you think you can help please contact the Captain, Les Dodd.

The Girls' Brigade put on a fabulous event on the 9th of November, the afternoon tea party in 40s style. Visitors to the event included veterans, the town Mayor and MP and lots of lovely people from the community. We had little evacuees in the shape of our N:vestigat girls, waitresses and servers (N:gage, N:counta, and N:spire) along with some volunteer helpers making mountains of sandwiches, scones and cakes. It was a fabulous afternoon with singing with Fiona and Jess, a tombola and raffle, all to raise money for the Treats for Troops charity. A huge well done to the girls and to all who made this event possible.

I have restarted doing assemblies at both Ponteland Primary monthly and as and when at Richard Coates Primary School. I have started a lunch craft and story club at Richard Coates for KS1 children alongside the headteacher there and some other teaching assistants. This term we are making advent wreaths and explaining the significance of the candles etc.... last week

we made the green wreath and over the next few weeks we will build it up into a full advent wreath for them to take home. The kids that were there were very engaged and excited. So so far so good!!

I am back at Toddlers on a Thursday morning mingling with the parents/grandparents/carers of the children and sticking and glueing and painting with the children. Check out the Toddlers' noticeboard in the hall to see what we have been up to. All that aside I am able to have really great conversations with the adults and therefore making links into the community. A real joy. Hopefully in the New Year I will be able to help launch a Sunday evening group for young people. I am talking to some of our older kids in the Brigades and asking if they would be interested in a Sunday evening group, where they can come and chill out, talk to their friends after a long weekend of study and share some of the good news of Jesus. So watch this space and please pray for positive responses from the young people. Please continue to pray for the work and the lives that we reach through all the work that goes on in the building week in week out.

I wish you the Peace of the Christmas season and every blessing for 2020.

Alison Maynard

SPIRAL NOTEPADS

Ideal Christmas gift

Very useful notepad with pen, paper, sticky markers and a ruler. Comes in four colours - black, grey, blue and red.



This item has been customised with name of Church and our mission statement.



£3 each from Rosemary Brown



TRAIDCRAFT EXCHANGE CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Mathew is a banana and livestock farmer. When he started to lose his sight at the age of eleven, his family could not afford the operation he needed to remove his cataracts. By sixteen, he was completely blind. Mathew refuses to let his disability get in his way. Every day, from morning till sundown, he works hard on his land – weeding his plot, tending to his trees and feeding his livestock – with no walking aid or guide dog to assist him. As the family breadwinner, he supports his wife and two young sons. His hard work, however, is not reaping the rewards his family deserves. “Sometimes the children say they’re not full, but there is no more food in the house,” he says. “I feel so bad, like I wasn’t able to provide, to fulfil the basic needs for my child.” Mathew is a remarkable man who already has all the drive and determination he needs to make a success of his farm. But all too often, people like him are excluded from opportunities due to stigma, prejudice, and misinformation surrounding disability. But there is reason to be hopeful. Mathew has recently joined a Traidcraft Exchange group alongside other disabled farmers in the area. By working together as a group, learning farming techniques tailored to their disabilities and growing new crops, disabled farmers can finally start to improve their incomes – and build a better future for their families. In just a short time, hardworking Mathew has made significant progress. “Being part of the group can help me by improving my farming and business skills,” he says. “For instance, I’ve already learned to grow coffee, which for me is a new crop.” Mathew is talented, resourceful, and ambitious – and he is capable of far more than his present situation allows. All he needs is the chance to keep learning – and this Christmas, Traidcraft Exchange is asking that we give him and others like him that chance. What a wonderful Christmas present that will be.



Donations to give Mathew and others like him the chance of a brighter future can be made at www.traidcraftexchange.org/Christmas

Bev



NEWS OF SHADE AND N. KENYA



Dear Friends, Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year from us in Kenya! It is now 15 years since Mark and I set up the community-based organisation SHADE in Samburu County of Northern Kenya. Over the years SHADE has sought to bridge the gaps in available community health services, animal health and production, and community development. With some gaps being filled, including improved access to health facilities, SHADE is focusing more on preventative health and the promotion of safe drinking water, hygiene, sanitation and use of pit latrines. SHADE recently constructed some public toilets in Loonjorin and re-laid water pipes for hand washing and supplying the health centre. Loonjorin health centre, with the help of local community health workers, continues to bring life-saving treatment within reach of over three thousand people in the vicinity of Loonjorin.

The goat donation project has been very successful with more families benefiting from the goats bought through the present scheme. The first offspring were given to other needy families and the first goats have gone on to produce a second lot of kids. Our next big project is one very close to our hearts. Most of you will know Steve Gray of Ponteland Methodist Church who sadly passed last December. He was a big supporter of SHADE and left SHADE a legacy. Steve was all about people coming together and we couldn't think of a better, more fitting use of Steve's legacy than to build a meeting place, a multifunctional building, for people to come together for all kinds of meetings, from adult literacy classes, to educational seminars, women and youth group meetings, and Church meetings. Loonjorin does not have any meeting house for community gatherings and the community are very supportive of the idea. We have seen how well used a similar meeting place in Tuum has been and SHADE has held many seminars there over the years. While Steve's gift will go a long way towards the construction of the building we need to raise funds to reach the total construction costs. Our target is to raise £7500.

Thank you for all your prayers and support. **Alison Lesingiran**

(The curry evening raised £756 for Shade. - Ed)

A LITTLE NOTE OF GREETING

Dear family in Ponteland Methodist Church; please receive a “hello” full of love from your friend in Colombia. It’s been a long time since the last time I messaged you, so I apologize for it. From the moment I arrived in Colombia, I haven’t stopped working. As I told you in my previous note, I got a job in a Christian school, but due to some complications, including the long-distance, I was not able to continue there. God in his mercy put me in a new place; it is a Jesuit school with an important tradition in education. Another reason to be thankful for my new job is that due to its location the commuting time has been drastically reduced since it is way closer to home. Working here has been an enormous challenge because they have their own par-

ticular way to teach which I have to learn day by day. Now, talking about family, things have not changed too much; I still live at home with my mother, her husband and my youngest sister. I know this may sound strange to you, but in Latin America, we tend to live with our parents for a long time. My mother’s health is stable at the moment; we pray it continues like this despite the unpredictable weather in



Bogota. I guess we all go through some ups and downs in life, and that is why we need to keep each other in our prayers. Being back into the routine and the busy life-style of Bogota has been good. However, I usually found myself thinking on the wonderful memories I have from Ponteland and its people. Thanks to your care and kindness my time in the UK was precious; you made me feel protected and loved. I am grateful for the great opportunity of working in such a beautiful project. This experience helped me to realise that this is what I want to dedicate my life to, to serve and contribute to spread the seed of the Gospel. Finally, I wish I could mention each one but I am sure you will understand that my heart is sincere. So I wish you all lovely, blessed and cosy festivities. Love

Tatiana

AN UPDATE FROM CHURCH COUNCIL

It can be difficult to know what to communicate following any meeting of the Church Council; what are people interested in? What do you want to know? To report on every report, discussion and decision in detail would require an edition of Cornerstone on its own! Below are some of the main items that I hope you might be interested in; if you have questions then please do speak to me or any member of the Council.

- **Worship:** We were about two months in to our new morning worship at the time the Council met and the general feeling was that, though there have been (and maybe still are) some teething problems, we are generally on the right track and that it's good and right that we are all together. Worship will continually be reviewed by the Leadership Team and Church Council; feedback welcome.
- **Finance:** Since 'Plan, Promise, Proceed' went out we have seen an increase in giving with about half of the forms returned at the time of the meeting. Thank-you to everyone who has reviewed their giving; it's still not too late to return your form!
- **Property:** Thanks were passed on to the team for the care and excellent state of the building and garden. Issues are addressed as they arise with car-parking a continual point for discussion, and one for which there are no easy answers.
- **Pastoral:** Following deaths and transfers our membership now stands at 129.
- **Additional Reports:** were heard and received from the Brigades, Alison (our Youth and Family Worker), Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Care and Share, The Stewards and The Pastoral Committee. There are regular updates in Cornerstone about some of these; if you have questions, please ask!
- **Marriage and Relationships** – The Methodist Church is engaging in wider discussion about this, please see separate update and notice.
- **Sabbatical** – Jona will be on sabbatical from March 23rd until June 29th. Details of cover will follow in due course.

Appointments:

- Peter Michell (Treasurer), Rachel Wood (Church Council Secretary) and Bev (Pastoral Secretary) were reappointed for another 12 months.
- The Church Council agreed to the creation of a new role of 'Worship Coordinator'; a Worship Coordinator will offer to work with visiting preachers to offer support and advice in the planning and delivery of worship. Ann Cooper, Rosemary Gray, Steve Small, Andrew Pay and Robin Hudson were all appointed to serve in this new role.
- It was agreed that Andrew Pay should begin training as a 'Worship Leader'; a post within Methodism where an individual can have responsibility (usually in conjunction with the preacher) for planning and leading all aspects of worship, with the exception of the sermon.
- The extension of the Leadership Team with two new co-opted members was also confirmed. The Leadership Team now consists of: Jona Sewell (Minister); Alison Maynard (Youth and Family Worker); Peter Michell (Treasurer and Steward); Pam Varley, Pete Cowey, Alison Bates, Brenda Rutter, Rosie Brown (Stewards); Val Michell (Pastoral Committee rep); Robin Hudson (Bridge rep); Geoff Lisle (Property Committee rep); Ann Cooper, Nigel Bates (Church Council elected reps); Peter Hindle (Fruitful Congregations – Co-opted rep); Chrys Hudson (Sunday School – Co-opted rep).

Rev Jona Sewell

LETS GIVE THANKS

Christmas is coming....it's on its way
Looking forward to our family day
When we all get together with thanks and love
For that baby boy sent to us from Heaven above
All good things in life He does give
No matter colour, age or where we live
So together give thanks... and pray
For the boy who came for all of us on Christmas Day.

Noreen Green

THE INNKEEPER'S TALE

You have found the right man. I spent my working life running the Inn at Bethlehem here. My son and his wife have the tenancy now. I sit here under my vine nowadays and think about the past. A bit lonely since my wife died, but the neighbours are good to an old man. It's the followers of the Way mostly that help. They remind me of that one special night.

It was in the time of Tiberias Caesar and his census. An excuse to raise the taxes. Did you know that this was King David's City, though it's only small?

Did I know what you have just told me? Of course not, but if we had known, would we have done anything differently? Probably not. How can I tell?

You see the whole of Bethlehem was in difficulty then. Stupid, it was, to uproot everyone to make them register at their ancestral place. All right in a big city, I suppose, but it made an impossible situation in small towns and villages. We Jews had been exiled for two generations, spread all over the world; there'd been a lot of marriage out and so on and families brought back higgledy-piggledy to live wherever we could find work or land. And there had been the Maccabean wars and a Roman invasion!

So when all the folk who claimed descent from King David turned up and wanted beds and food for the whole of the census period, this place was crammed to overflowing. We had strangers doubling and trebling up in our guest rooms, a raft-load bedding down on the roof sleeping head to tail like fish in the market boxes, and their servants packed into the stable block or lying on the straw bales in the barn, not to mention the horses, asses and mules packed so close you wouldn't believe. What a nightmare for any innkeeper! I don't know how we coped, but, bless the Lord, we did it somehow.

And to crown it all, this carpenter and his pregnant wife turned up late in the evening. I would have shut the door on them, but my wife had a good look at the young lass and saw she was very near her time, and took pity on her. We had to rearrange the stabling and even then they had to share the loose box with the old ox and their own donkey.

The night of the Star? Yes, I'll never forget that. My wife had been bustling about arranging all and I was chivvying the staff and they were grumbling as we tried to get order in the chaos. We had just got settled in our own room – all the kids there, too, as their room had been let out – when she said she could hear cries of distress out in the yard and guessed that the young girl was in labour. So up she got and knocked up our neighbourhood midwife and the two of them attended to the birth, while I kept well out of the way and persuaded the father to come and sit by the fire with me in the courtyard and calm down. When the baby boy had been born and cleaned up the carpenter was allowed to go and see his radiantly happy wife and the little mite, so quiet and good in a straw-filled manger, of all things! Things quietened down for an hour or so and then there was sound of running feet in the street and a whole pack of shepherds knocked on the door. They said a brilliant star was shining over the Inn and they had seen a vision of angels. The newborn child was no ordinary child of David's line, they said, he was to be the Anointed One foretold by the prophets! They were so excited and urgent that nothing would satisfy them but entry into the courtyard and a sight of the new baby in the manger. They worshipped him as if he were indeed royalty and gave the Mother a lamb from their flock. That paid the family's bill for us! I think the baby's father did some woodwork for the midwife as her fee.

The family stayed in the village for a few days and I am told they had important visitors during that time. Then they left suddenly in the night, southward bound.

It was not long after that that we suffered the terrible massacre; my brother lost a little son then and so many villagers suffered that all the good times seemed to have been forgotten. Awful man, Herod, we were glad that he died soon after.

Now you tell me that the baby the shepherds were told about is the same Galilean preacher who scandalised the priests and loved and healed the poor! Wonderful! He too met a sad end, but the Way People insist he is alive and rules in Heaven.

John M Gill

1940S VETERANS TEA PARTY

1940s Veterans Tea Party organised by 1st Ponteland Girls Brigade held Saturday November 9th, 2019. It was a free event, as a gift to the local community with an option to wear a period costume. It was a celebration and a way to remember the veterans and their families in our community, who sacrificed their time and sometimes their lives so we have freedom.

One of the GB leaders, Ela Akay applied for a grant from Ponteland Town Council for the purpose of organising a community event and we were awarded £500 as part of their “Poppy Project”. The older girls from the N:spire section of the Company organised and budgeted the event and the whole Company helped with creating decorations, entertainment and making the food! All of the village were invited with special invitations for the local MP, Mayor, town council, care home residents and veterans of the community.

Over 200 people came and we managed to raise £450 for “Treats for Troops” charity. The younger girls entertained the guest by singing ‘It’s a long way from Tipperary’ and ‘Pack up your troubles’. The older girls served all the guests their afternoon tea. There was also a singalong led by Fiona Thomson and Jess Williamson. Many people from our own Church community gave up their time to help with set up and clear up! There were also many generous donations of cakes and scones and over 200 sandwiches were made. As a Company we were honoured to be part of such an important event and help our community celebrate Remembrance Day!

Helle Sewell

*All those involved in the **Girls’ Brigade** 1940s tea party deserve a special commendation. It was a huge success.*



ans Tea Party



MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Methodist Church has, over recent years, been discussing issues concerning marriage and relationships; including issues around same-sex marriage. At the 2019 Methodist Conference (national decision-making body) a proposal was received that the Church adopt a 'Mixed Economy' policy on this specific matter. This would mean that individual churches that wanted to do so could opt-in and permit same-sex marriage ceremonies on their premises, but no church could be forced or coerced to do this. In the same way each member of the clergy would be free to decide whether they would be willing to preside at a same-sex marriage ceremony or not. The Conference directed that this proposal should be discussed at a District (regional) level.

The Newcastle District, to which we belong, is holding one event in each local Circuit to explore the issues and hear views. All of the dates and venues are on the poster entitled "Marriage and Relationships Consultations" (see opposite page) and people are free to attend any event, not just the one in their Circuit. The event in the Newcastle West Circuit (our Circuit) will be held at Westerhope Methodist Church on Saturday February 29th at 10 am.

People are encouraged to read the Marriage and Relationships Report called "God in Love Unites Us", which was received by the Conference this year, in advance of attending an event. The report can be downloaded from the Methodist Church website by searching "2019 Marriage and Relationships report" on the homepage, or a digital copy can be emailed to you upon request by Hazel (newcastle.west.methodist@gmail.com). Each church also has a small number of paper copies of the report which can be read and returned so that others can also have access.

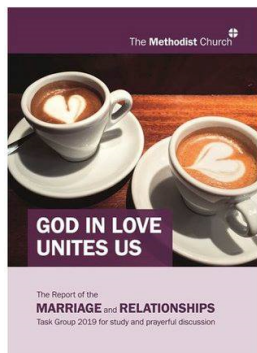
If you have any questions about this then please speak to your Minister.

Rev Jona Sewell



Marriage and Relationships Consultations

Monday 20th January, 10am - Lanchester Methodist Church, DH7 0ER
Monday 20th January, 7pm - Houghton Methodist Church, DH4 4BH
Wednesday 22nd January, 2pm - Alnwick Methodist Church, NE66 1NP
Wednesday 22nd January, 7pm - Cullercoats Methodist Church, NE30 3LJ
Wednesday 29th January, 2pm - Amble Methodist Church, NE65 0AG
Thursday 30th January, 7pm - Wesley Memorial, Gateshead, NE9 5EY
Saturday 1st February, 2pm - Great Lumley Methodist Church, DH3 4JB
Tuesday 4th February, 7pm - Hexham Trinity Methodist Church, NE46 3LS
Saturday 8th February, 10am - Castletown Methodist Church, SR5 3DS
Thursday 27th February, 10am - Brunswick Methodist Church, NE1 7BJ
Thursday 27th February, 7pm - Dunston Hill Methodist Church, NE11 9NQ
Saturday 29th February, 10am - Westerhope Methodist Church, NE5 5HA



The Marriage and Relationship Report was discussed at the 2019 Conference and commended for study and prayerful discussion. Throughout our District, 12 dates are offered for these consultations lasting two hours per session.

If you would like to attend please make sure you read the report first. Every minister has a copy and further copies are available from the District Office or download your own from the Methodist Church in Britain website www.methodist.org.uk.

District Office - admin@newcastlemethodistdistrict.org
Telephone - 0191 4901626



This easy recipe is an ideal way to use up left-over chicken. I'm sure it would work just as well with the left-over Christmas turkey.

This recipe is sufficient for two servings so double up as required.

Judith

Chicken Noodle Soup

50g noodles
1 carrot, thinly sliced
3 or 4 mushrooms, thinly sliced
1 small onion, chopped
2 tbsp sweetcorn, canned or frozen
1 tbsp fresh root ginger
1 clove garlic, chopped (optional)
1 litre chicken stock
2 tsp soy sauce
175g(approx) cooked chicken
chopped into bitesize pieces



Pour the stock into a pan, with the carrots, onion and mushrooms.

Add the ginger, garlic and a little ground black pepper.

Bring to the boil, then turn down the heat and simmer for 10 mins.

Add the chicken and sweetcorn.

Cook for a further 5 mins.

Add the noodles and soy sauce.

Simmer for a further 3-4 mins until the noodles are tender.

Adjust the seasoning to taste.

Ladle into bowls.

TOY SERVICE FOR CORNERSTONE IN BENWELL

“Imagine being so deprived you have never seen the countryside, have never experienced the feel of sand between your toes and have had a Christmas cancelled, in the words of one child, “because your family can’t afford it.” I read this in an editorial in the Sunday Times when I got



home from our annual Toy Service. It was introducing the paper's Christmas Appeal to “help children from Britain's most deprived areas enjoy a safe and happy festive season”. That is part of the reason why the trustees of Cornerstone have been so committed to re-structuring the staff and the way we work so we could continue to serve people in Benwell despite the drastic reduction in our income when the diocese had to end its grant. This reduced our income by over a third. Having stabilised, we are now looking to grow our work based on opening a café; we will grow carefully but want to be open five days a week from 07.30 to 17.00 or later. We also want to provide wholesome meals to children and youth, especially during the school holidays when school meals are not available. (It was the public reaction to a story about child hunger in school holidays earlier this year that prompted the Sunday Times to have a child focus for this year's Christmas Appeal.)

The toys so generously brought to our Toy Service will greatly help our work. The head teachers of the local primary schools identify children who have little or no chance of any sort of Christmas present. These toys, and others coming from a variety of churches across greater Newcastle, will enable us to give such children some happiness.

We will also be able to supplement what is available in our shop, open three days a week. We provide pre-loved clothes, small household items, books, videos and toys to a steady stream of



shoppers; often pointed in our direction by the West End food bank and the West End refugee service. Many shoppers are happy to pay a small amount for the items they need. A token it may be, but it helps maintain dignity. When even that is too much of a stretch, we happily give what is needed. This helps us reach needy families whose children are not yet at school, because they are too young or have only recently arrived in the area.

Thank you for all your support throughout the year. We will happily receive more of your already loved items and, of course, any money you are able to give us.

Peter Hindle

VILLAGE NEWS

Our Library

The local press has reported that Northumberland CC is to consult on how library services can be better used. I do not use our library since it moved from the centre of the village but I went last week to try to get information about the survey. There was a librarian on duty who told me she is waiting for information. She believes that information will be given in Ponteland News & Views. The survey will be pointless if it only consults users of the library. You might like to note that a librarian works at the library between the hours of 9.30 – 3.30 on Tuesday and Friday.

Commercial Horse Breeding Stable

This scheme on the A696 south-west of Middle Coldcoats has been approved by six votes to two. Road safety issues were the concern but a new access has been approved.

Jennifer Hardy

Care and Share





IN MEMORY OF BRIAN BAKER

We're fundraising in Dad's memory to fund research to find a cure, and life-changing services for those currently in need of support from Parkinson's UK. Dad was so brave and courageous in living the last 15 years or so of his life with Parkinson's and more recently Parkinson's Dementia, and we would like to try and raise some much-needed funds to try to help others either avoid the situation completely, or get help when they need

it. Anything that you can give in Dad's memory will be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance.

Donations in memory of Brian can be made payable to "Parkinson UK" and sent with a covering letter to Alan Greenwood and Sons c/o Miss N Handover, 1 Anchor Hill, Knaphill, Woking GU21 2HL or via web at <https://brian-baker2.muchloved.com>

Aidan Baker

	<p>1st Ponteland Girls' & Boys' Brigade Coffee Morning Saturday 7th December in the Church Hall 10.00 am - 12.00 noon Hot Sandwiches served with Tea or Coffee Raffle, Tombola, Cake Stall, Plant Sales Please come along and support our Brigades</p>	

	<p>1st Ponteland Girls' & Boys' Brigade 'Voices of Advent' Carol Service Sunday 8th December Ponteland Methodist Church 10.00 am - 11.00 am</p>	
<p>Please come along and support us and hear the Christmas story told by the members of our Brigades Refreshments will be served in the hall after the service All are welcome</p>		
<i>Ignored</i>	<i>Outsider</i>	<i>Alone</i>
<i>Fragile</i>		

NOVEMBER

What a miserable month this has proved to be with grey skies, heavy rain and low temperatures. However we count ourselves lucky not to suffer the horrendous floods other counties have endured, although many local people have had amber warnings. November is the ninth month of the old Roman year which began in March, and the 11th was noted as the beginning of Winter. Several Saints' days occur in November with All Saints on the 1st, All Souls on the 2nd and St Catherine's on the 25th and also two or three lesser-known Saints eg St Andrew's on the 30th!

The shortest title for any poem must be simply "No"! It was written by Thomas Hood in the early 19th century and here are a few lines:

"No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds
No-venber"

The Remembrance Day Service held at the War Memorial in Ponteland was, as always, extremely moving. This year two school children - a boy and a girl - took it in turns to read out the names from the memorial of all who had fallen. It was very notable that so many from this area had lost their lives when the population was so much smaller than it is now. Also the same surname was repeated frequently where brothers had perished, or family members.

In the evening, curtains are pulled closed early and it's a nice cosy feeling to shut out the sight of wet leaves, bare trees and little lakes on the lawns. Hedgehogs were still around early November but at last they have retired into hibernation for winter. Those of us who have pussycats can take a lesson from their relaxed life style! When wet and cold outside, simply curl up into a ball and go to sleep.

Jean Tweedie

GARDENING FOR DECEMBER 2019 (AND JANUARY 2020)

May I wish all readers "The Compliments of the Season" and good gardening in 2020. The weather has seriously delayed our normal "tidy up" but I am sure that time will come when we will get opportunities to do what we need to do even if the days are short. We can't remember the grassed areas of the garden being so wet over such a long time during our 42 years here.

Joy (our daughter) bought me a monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*) over 30 years ago. Knowing that this little plant (then 15 inches tall) had a potential of a height of 40 feet I planted it in a central position in front of our house. It is now about 12 feet high so it won't reach its potential in our lifetime. Much is being said and written about planting trees at the present time so if you only have space to plant one tree you might think of it as a feature. Deciduous/flowering feature trees drop leaves which need clearing at this time of year so why not choose a conifer which will grow more slowly, needs little care, clipping or pruning? Big conifers do not have to be brutes; choose wisely with guidance of growth to maturity, height and spread potential and you can have a specimen tree to be proud of. *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Pembury Blue' can tower in excess of 40 feet. It has dazzling silvery-blue foliage and is a head-turner all the year round. Going smaller *Pinus flexilis* 'Vanderwolf's Pyramid' will get up to 10 feet in 10 years. It is a showy evergreen noted for its long, blue-green, often silvery needles. This pyramidal specimen will delight in winter. Smaller again, *Abies Koreana* 'Silberlocke' is unlikely to exceed seven feet even after twenty years. The dark green leaves of this Korean, with its attractive silvery white undersides, provide a bold contrast to its showy upright cones which emerge green before maturing to purple. For a lighter colour there is *Thuja plicata* 'Goldy 4ever'. This is a modern variety of the western red cedar with upright sprays of bright golden foliage in spring darkening to bronze-yellow in winter so it is never dull. It should reach about 7 feet in 10 years.

When we built our garden room on to the south east gable of the house, again about 30 years ago, we set out a wider front border. In an effort to reduce a lot of clearing and replanting in the spring and autumn we decided to plant quite a lot of dwarf conifers and we still have a number of them. We were going for low maintenance, little or no pruning, year-round colour, seasonal interest

from foliage and cones, hardy and drought-tolerant. We went to Halls of Heddon for many of our young trees and picked others up where we saw them. We were keen to know the growth potential and went for some varieties ending in “Nana”. Some we had as ground cover. There are now many more “dwarf” (be sure to get the height and spread potential over time in years) conifers available. They prefer slightly acid growing conditions – we added some peat when we were planting. They will benefit from an annual feed of general purpose fertilizer in late winter. The labels on our trees have been lost and the planting plan can’t be found!! We continue to trim as necessary. They have not grown above 5 feet. Blackbirds have nested in one of them and small birds flit between them and the bird bath. The 2020 seed catalogues are all out. I believe many “gardeners” rely less on growing plants from seeds when they can buy either plugs or more established plants from nurseries and garden centres. I still like to try new varieties of vegetables from seed and also benefit from packets of seeds, both vegetables and flowers, that are given away with the gardening magazines that I buy. Garden News includes a packet of seeds with each issue for about 40 weeks of the year. Grow Your Own tends to include vegetable seeds after I have made my orders – some are welcome! Each year Which? Gardening gives details of new varieties (in plant form) of both annual and perennial flowers and shrubs. This year there are details of three new flowers. Petunias are very popular – the new one is Petunia ‘Lightning Sky’ – the world’s first star- and dot-patterned petunia to flower throughout the summer, Which? found some variability in the cream stars and it became a little straggly by the end of August. It is available from Hayloft as plug plants. Alstroemeria seems to have become a flower arranger’s delight. The variety ‘Summer Relieve’ is claimed to be the tallest in the Summer Paradise series with stems that grow to over 3 feet – perfect for cutting. It may need staking but Which? found it to grow very well needing a lot of space. It can be bought from H W Hyde & Son. A new Weigela – ‘All Summer Peach’ - will flower from April to October. It is available from Crocus costing £17.99 for a two litre pot plant. Which? think they might be best suited to life in a planter where they should achieve at least two feet in height and spread.

Syd Cowan

FAMILY NEWS

We wish **David MacDonald** a good recovery following his recent hand surgery.

It's great to see **Andrew Pay** back with us again.

Doug and Barbara Hogg need a mention. Doug is also doing well again after a poorly spell.

We hope that **Alan Groves** will be restored to full health again very soon.

Please remember **Sheila Browell, Noreen Green**, and others who struggle to get out, in your prayers.

We continue to remember the **Turner** family in our prayers.

To Vicky & Kris Barton on Friday 22nd November 2019, a son, William Whyatt Luke, a grandson for Richard and Kay Gill and great-grandson for **John Gill**.

We continue to pray for **Jenny Lewis**.

There was a service of thanksgiving for **Allan Roberts** on Tuesday 26th November.

The service of Celebration for **Brian Baker** was held on Friday 15th November.



Congratulations
to
Jim and Geraldine Dobbs
on
their marriage
on
Saturday 2nd November.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

December

Tuesday 3 rd	14.30 Women's Fellowship—Advent Service
Thursday 5 th	19.30 Focus—Songs and Stories of Christmas
	19.30 Forum—Foodbank by John McCorry
Saturday 7 th	10.00 Brigades' Christmas Fayre
Sunday 8 th	10.00 Brigades' Carol Service
Sunday 8 th	18.30 David MacDonald preaching at the evening service
Monday 9 th	12.15 Ecumenical Prayer Meeting
Saturday 14 th	10.00 Care and Share Christmas Fayre
Wednesday 18 th	14.30 Grange Lea Christmas Service
Sunday 22 nd	18.30 Carol Service
Christmas Eve	19.00 Ecumenical Readings and Carols at St Mary's
Christmas Day	10.30 Family Celebration

January

Saturday 4 th	19.00 Meanders Meal at Ponteland Golf Club
Sunday 5 th	10.00 Annual Covenant Service
Thursday 9 th	19.30 Focus –Rev Jona Sewell
	19.30 Forum - Humour in the Ministry by David MacDonald
Monday 13 th	12.15 Ecumenical Prayer Meeting
Tuesday 14 th	14.30 Women's Fellowship—Members Day
Sunday 19 th	18.30 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service at St Matthew's
Monday 20 th	12.00 WPCU prayers and lunch at the Methodist Church
Wednesday 22 nd	12.00 WPCU prayers and lunch at St Mary's
Thursday 23 rd	12.00 Focus Lunch at Golf Club
Friday 24 th	12.00 WPCU prayers and lunch at Darras Hall United Reformed Church
Tuesday 28 th	14.30 Women's Fellowship—Geoff Orrock

Preachers December

1st 10.00am Wynne
6.30pm Ridley
8th 10.00am Sewell (AA P)
6.30pm Sewell (S)
15th 10.00am Sewell
6.30pm Orrock
22nd 10.00am Woolley (S)
6.30pm Sewell (CS)
29th 10.00am LA
6.30pm No Service

Preachers January

5th 10.00am Sewell (Cov)
6.30pm Woolley (S)
12th 10.00am Sewell
6.30pm Barrick
19th 10.00am Cunningham
6.30pm WPCU at
St Matthew's
16th 10.00am Wriglesworth
6.30pm Stephenson

Christmas Services in December

Sunday 8th 10am GB/BB Christmas Parade Service

Thursday 12th 7.00pm Village Carol Service -Memorial Hall

Wednesday 18th 6.00pm Carols on the Green

Sunday 22nd 6.30pm Candlelight Carol Service

Tuesday 24th 7.00pm Carols and readings at St Mary's

Wednesday 25th 10.30am Family Celebration



From The Editors

*Don't forget that copy for the February edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 24th January 2020**. The editor's email address is andrew73anderson@gmail.com . The editorial committee is Andy Anderson, Jennifer Hardy, Jona Sewell and Viv Whyte.*