

# Ponteland Methodist Church Cornerstone

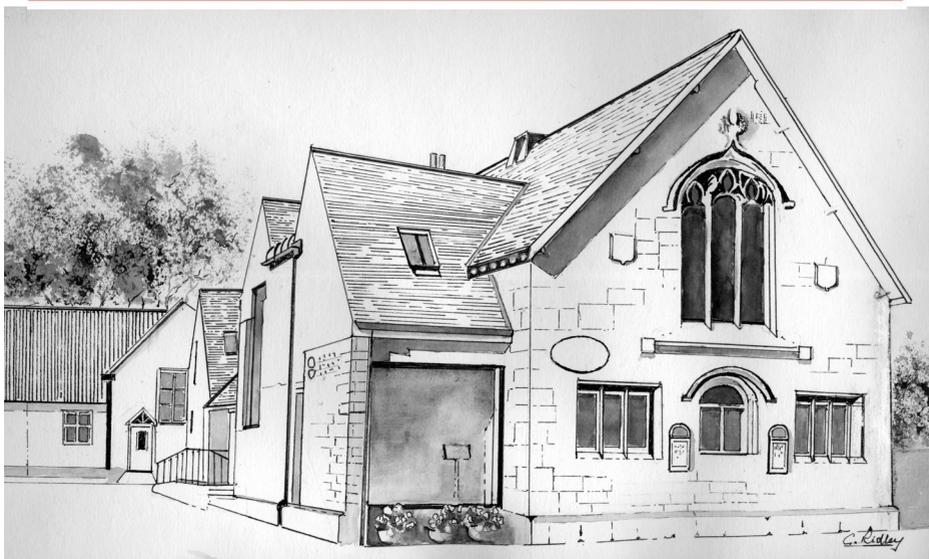


St. Valentine

beheaded 269a.d.

*The proof of love is in the works. Where love exists, it works great things. But when it ceases to act, it ceases to exist.*

Pope St. Gregory the Great



**February 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

- 12.00pm 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 (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  
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Church website <http://www.ponteland-methodist-church.org.uk/>

## MINISTER'S LETTER

Do not be afraid

It is said that the phrase 'Do not be afraid' appears 365 times in the Bible, one for each day of the year (I have no idea if this is true as I've never counted!).

Whether true or not the fact is within the stories in the Bible people are regularly told 'Do not be afraid'.

We saw it recently in the Nativity story. Mary, Joseph and the shepherds were all told not to be afraid. Fear would have stopped Mary listening to the Angel. Fear may have stopped Joseph marrying Mary. Fear may have stopped the shepherds from visiting the newborn, and later in the narrative fear may have stopped Joseph from taking the family to Egypt.

This is what fear does. It stops us living full lives. It steals away possibility. It stifles, inhibits, damages and causes pain.

When people are told in the Bible 'Do not be afraid' I find myself wondering; can we really remove fear from our lives in the same way we might choose to remove chocolate, alcohol or junk food? Of course, we know that fear cannot be removed this way! However, 1 John 4:18 says 'there is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear'. I believe when people are told 'Do not be afraid' then the invitation is to live and rest in God's love, because only there is fear truly cast out.

As we move forward this year, I wonder what are you afraid of? What might stop us seeking and following God's will? What might stop us living full lives for ourselves, the church and God? Whatever fear holds you, may each of us rest in the perfect love that drives out fear. May each of us live in love, and may each of us journey onwards with God, trusting Him for all that is to come.

God Bless



## 10 WAYS TO ENCOURAGE SPIRIT-FILLED WORSHIP

If you want to start a “spirited” discussion amongst Christians, ask them to define/describe *Spirit-filled worship*. For some it is found in the passionate, energetic expressions of worship that bring the faithful to their feet, clapping, singing, even shouting God’s praise. Others find it in the overwhelming sense of God’s presence as one quietly prays in the places of great reverence and stillness that honour God. Some will want to quote the Bible to you. But which passage? Is it one of the many demonstrating exuberance and power before the Lord, like David dancing in the procession of the Ark or the coming of the Spirit to the disciples? Or do we look at the times when the Spirit comes in stillness, as in a whisper in 1 Kings to Elijah or the woman who washed the feet of Christ with her tears? Here are 10 thoughts and suggestions to focus our hearts on the Spirit *in worship* so that we can, with confidence, know that our worship is Spirit-filled.

### **Be God honouring**

It can be very easy to lose ourselves in the actions of worship and forget the reason for worship. Allow the Spirit to move in your heart so that words sung and prayers prayed are directed at the One who called us to worship and who is worthy to be worshipped.

### **Be without avarice**

Don’t look at the offerings in worship, be it singing, preaching, praying, etc as needing to fulfil your personal preference “punchcard”. When we set aside what we selfishly desire and accept what God has prepared for us, believing God knows what we need, then our hearts are ready for worship in the Spirit.

### **Be in relationship**

Spirit-filled worship is evidenced when we can love God and love others in a community of worship in ways that we could not do on our own.

### **Be moveable**

So many people come to worship and find fault with anything that takes them away from their comfort zone. Yes, God wants to minister to you where you are through your worship. But, the Spirit wants to lead you to where God wants you to be.

### **Be faithful**

In today’s culture, the norm has become attending worship only

when it fits our schedule. God's Spirit can especially fill your worship in the times when you sacrifice your schedule to God's command to be faithful.

### **Be honest**

We don't only worship when we are happy. The Psalmist approached the throne angry many times, yet always remembered and worshipped the One who was worthy of praise. Be honest about your feelings before God and allow the Spirit to shape your words and open your heart and mind to receive God's words for you.

### **Be patient**

Last week's worship experience stirred your passions and your soul like never before and now you want more. This week's worship is leaving you flat and uninterested. Ask God's Spirit to awaken your heart and let *God* stir your soul. Worship is about God first, not you.

### **Be expressive**

Tell God how you think and feel about God and let the Spirit shape how those thoughts and emotions are expressed. This may mean you sing with joy or it may mean you stand/sit in silence before the Lord because no word or action can adequately convey what you need to bring before the throne.

### **Be humble**

Don't sing or pray loudly just to hear yourself sing (or just so others can hear you sing). The Bible clearly says we are to humble ourselves before the Lord. Allow the Spirit to give you words to speak and songs to sing so that you can worship God in the power of the Spirit, at whatever volume that may be.

### **Be contrite and forgiven**

We come before the throne with a contrite heart so that we may know the forgiveness of the Lord and worship God in that forgiveness. Allow God's Spirit to open your worship to the power of forgiveness since only the contrite and forgiven can truly appreciate and worship who God is and what God has done.

I am sure you can think of many more. Ask God to let the Spirit lead your worship and your worship will always be "Spirit-filled" regardless of how it may look or sound.

ShareFaith Magazine 2016 by **Dr Craig Gilbert**  
[www.sharefaith.com/blog/2016/02/10-ways-encourage-spirit-filled-worship](http://www.sharefaith.com/blog/2016/02/10-ways-encourage-spirit-filled-worship)

## STOLEN IDENTITY

During one of my Arabic lessons, my Christian Arabic teacher, Rifka, out of the blue suddenly shared something that took me by surprise. I was stunned as she shared a little and then continued with the lesson. I asked if I could return when we both had more time, to hear more of her story. She agreed. Subsequently over a sweet herbal tea, Rifka began to speak about her early life. This is her story.

Rifka was born in 1945 in the city of Jaffa and lived there with her parents, three sisters and one brother. Her father was a shop-keeper with his own business. In 1948, during the first Arab-Israeli war, her family were forced to leave their home. Her parents expected that they would return shortly, leaving everything behind including money and jewellery, thinking it would be safer in their home. However they were sent away to Jordan and to date, have never been allowed to return to Jaffa. Overnight life became a disaster as they suddenly found themselves living as refugees in small brown tents. After some time, Rifka's father was employed as a book-keeper, earning very little. Her mother taught four subjects to children in one tent. Eventually the family was able to move into a small house with no water or electricity.

Rifka married in 1966 and moved to be with her husband who lived in Bethlehem. At that time the West Bank was annexed by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Her passport stated she was a citizen of the Hashemite Kingdom and her birthplace was Jaffa. On 5<sup>th</sup> June 1967 the six day Arab-Israeli war broke out. Soon the family found themselves under occupation by Israel. Where they lived they were surrounded by fields, and their blessed olive trees. The olive trees are an inheritance for Palestinians, being passed down in the family for generations.

In 2004, like so many, their land was confiscated in order for the Separation Wall to be built. As a result Rifka's family were prevented from accessing their land. These were difficult times for them. On many occasions soldiers and jeeps would surround their home. They had no freedom of movement. Rifka would be anxious, for instance, being asked when she left the house, "Where are you going?". "To the church," was her reply.

Rifka and her husband had a family of three. Like her mother she became a teacher. She continued after retiring twelve years ago to teach Arabic to foreigners.

So what was it that Rifka said that stunned me during my Arabic lesson, that prompted me to hear more of her story? It was hearing that when her passport expired and she applied for a new one, she was told, "You were born in Jerusalem". "No, you have made a mistake", Rifka replied, "I was born in Jaffa". "Well, if you want me to issue you a passport you were born in Jerusalem!" was the curt reply, basically take it or leave it. Now her birthplace identity too was stolen, blotting out proof of her family's former existence in Jaffa, which would result in their having no rights, not being able to return to land and property there. Her new Palestinian passport states she was born in 1945 in "Jerusalem". It is difficult to reconcile the facts, that her true birthplace recorded in one passport has been changed to a different place of birth in another, in effect contributing towards erasing her past identity. This is sad and shocking! Unfortunately she is not alone, many share the same story.

**Deacon Angleena** Keizer is the Methodist Mission Partner to Israel/Palestine, based at the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem. This article is taken from her blog which can be found at <https://deaconangleenakeizer.wordpress.com/>

## **PASTORAL VISITORS**

For all those members and friends who wish to receive continuing contact with the Church, a link is made to a "pastoral visitor", a volunteer who keeps in touch, visiting when appropriate, and keeping the minister informed of any issues of concern, eg ill health.

If you are new to Ponteland Methodist Church and would like to be allocated to a pastoral visitor please speak to one of the stewards or contact Bev, via the church pigeonhole or, preferably, by email at [pmc.pastoral@sky.com](mailto:pmc.pastoral@sky.com)

If you would like to become a pastoral visitor please speak to Bev or Jona.

There will be a meeting of the Pastoral Committee, for all current visitors, on Tuesday 12th February at 7:00pm, in the Church. Jona will be leading a discussion on prayer within our pastoral work.

**Bev**

## **PONTELAND AREA BIBLE SOCIETY ACTION GROUP**

After the March 2018 Spring Lunch, I was asked to write a piece about the Bible Society lunches, and I thought it would be of interest to look back a few years and see what information I could find that had survived the years and circulate it to all the churches who have supported the group so magnificently. In December 1965 a Bible Society bank account was opened indicating that this was when the Action Group was founded. In February 1973 in St Mary's Church Magazine the Rev Alan Porteus wrote:-

*Dear Friends,*

*The Review cover this month is a further reminder of what promises to be the greatest piece of inter-church activity that we have so far undertaken in this community. The fact that the Bible Week in April is sponsored by Ponteland Christian Council and that the members of the Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic and United Reformed Churches (in alphabetical order) will be taking part together is admirable.*

In May 1973 the first Bible Week cements all the local Churches working together.

After 1975 a committee was formed with representatives from all the local Churches to enable closer working together and greater fundraising opportunities for the Bible Society.

Late 1970s/early 1980s. Two lunches were organised - Spring and Autumn. A coffee morning in late June and a Bible Society Service in late October.

2014. The coffee morning fundraising became less effective and the decision was taken to concentrate entirely on the lunches and the Bible Society Service.

2018. In no particular order the Churches working together are: Ponteland Methodist Church, Milbourne Methodist Church, St Mathew's Church, St Saviour's Church Milbourne, St Mary's Church and the URC. The Area Action Group has been fundraising for 52 years. It has raised and sent to the Bible Society in London £87,455 to December 2017.

The lunches are highly successful and enthusiastically supported. A two-course lunch is served to 120 people. They have become an inter church focus of fellowship and friendship over the

years. The Rev A Porteus would be extremely proud. The support the group has received over many years is greatly appreciated by the organising committee and we hope it will continue for many years to come.

**Rosie Creighton**

## **VILLAGE NEWS**

### **Proposal for apartments on the Orchards, Callerton Lane**

This application was first made in March 2015 then it was for 20 apartments. This latest application is for 13 apartments and the height of the building is less.

### **Yoga classes for people with Parkinson's**

This new initiative has just begun and classes are held from 1.30-2.30pm on Mondays until 11 March at the URC Church.

### **Merton Way car park discs**

A few people have been fined for not displaying a parking disc. These are available from shops in Merton Way.

### **Health walks**

A meeting was held in the Leisure Centre on 15 January to discuss a plan to start these walks in April.

### **Flood Alleviation Scheme**

The Environment Agency organised an event in the Memorial Hall on 23rd January to appraise people of the current flood defences and further options.

### **Northumberland Local Plan**

The latest version of the plan was discussed at the full NCC meeting in January. Consultation is due to run until 13th March.

**Jennifer Hardy**

## **February 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 families.

- 3rd Feb - All Age Worship in the Church - Jona Sewell
- 10th Feb - Jona Sewell
- 17th Feb - Tim Woolley - Communion
- 24th Feb - David Forrester

Bridge Prayer Meeting at Sue and Abraham Matthews' on Friday 8th Feb. All are welcome.





## **Fairtrade Fortnight: 25th February – 10th March 2019**

For two weeks each year, thousands of individuals, companies and groups across the UK come together with the Fairtrade Foundation to celebrate the people who grow our food; people who live in some of the poorest countries in the world and who are often exploited and badly paid. This year the focus is on the people – in particular the women – who grow the cocoa in the chocolate we love so much.

£1.98 is the amount a cocoa farmer in West Africa needs to earn each day in order to achieve a living income. A living income means enough money to live a simple but dignified life, paying for essentials such as clothing, medicine and school. Currently, a typical cocoa farmer in Cote d'Ivoire lives on less than 78p a day. Almost all cocoa farmers in West Africa live in poverty, despite some chocolate companies making massive profits.

For the women the situation is even worse. They may plant and harvest on the farm, look after children, carry water, collect wood, cook and clean for the family, and transport the cocoa beans to market but they are likely to see even less money for their work.

This is why this year the Fairtrade Foundation is campaigning for a living income to become a reality for cocoa farmers in West Africa. By working together with governments, chocolate companies and retailers to make the commitments and policies necessary, we can make it happen. A living income is not a luxury but a human right.

For further information on Fairtrade Fortnight and on how to support the campaign, go to

[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

**Bev**



## A TALE OF VELVET NOSES AND FURRY FEET

Early in the 1950s a lady called Tilly Smith liaised with a Sami Reindeer Herder to bring a herd of reindeer over to the Cairngorms. Very quickly the herd was established most successfully and the animals roam to this day in over 10,000 acres in the highest UK mountains of the Cairngorm National Park.

When we visited the Cairngorms in early December 2018, the group was delighted to see approximately 30 on a lower slope, grazing on an area where the snow was thin enough for grazing. To add to our delight when we were visiting Granton-on-Spey, an open horse-box vehicle was parked and inside were four reindeer. Needless to say we all pressed our noses into the slots and these gentle creatures allowed us to stroke their velvet noses. Sometime in the early part of this century, my family and I booked a walk to visit the herd. We weren't advised that the



“walk” depended on where the herd was at the precise time of our visit. As it happened, it was a long and challenging trek to reach them but the reward was wonderful. Our guide had a sack of food and we were invited to hand feed these willing and friendly creatures. Reindeer don't have teeth – they have hard gums and when they nibble the food in one's hand it is a very strange experience.

Reindeer really are extraordinary animals. Even the soles of their feet are covered with fur and as they move around in the snow, they don't make footprints but their feet have a “clicking” mechanism which can be heard in the dark for others to know their whereabouts.

In December they have been in great demand visiting garden visitor centres and supporting Santa Claus in his duties! When they are transported any distance, they travel in a huge specially designed refrigerated large van as they must be cool. Also they need food regularly and often as they are ruminants; they are “self-sufficient” from time to time.

Christmas is over for another year and the reindeer won't be going anywhere in the near future. No doubt their bookings will be made in good time as each reindeer “on duty” has to be measured for his/her red velvet harness with jingle bells attached!

**Jean Tweedie**

## REACHING FOR THE STRAW

In a parish there was to be a nativity play, like every year on Christmas Eve. This time the young people wrote the nativity play themselves, and they really had thought of everything; even the ox and the donkey, yes even the straw.

At the dress rehearsal when, as a general rule, everything must go wrong, in fact pretty much everything did go wrong. Hardly anyone had remembered their words, the staging was largely unfinished, and what was worse: the three kings had simply been forgotten. For no apparent reason, these important roles had not been filled at all.

However, as kings were regarded as being essential, someone suggested that they ask around in the parish for anyone who was prepared, at the last minute, to be a king. It would no longer be necessary to learn words off by heart; it would be enough if the three actors brought a gift to lay at the crib. No sooner was it said than it was agreed.

And so suddenly, once again it was Christmas, indeed it was Christmas Eve; the church was packed, the congregation full of anticipation, the cast excited. The nativity play began, and it began well. It continued wonderfully, nobody got stuck and when someone did hesitate, it was in exactly the right place and fitted perfectly with the Christmas story.

And then the final scene, the entrance of the three kings, those who had been given this honour at the last minute. Unrehearsed they made their appearance, "live" so to speak.

The first king was a man, mid-forties maybe, or even older. He was carrying a crutch, although was obviously not using it. Everyone watched in anticipation and listened intently as he laid the crutch before the crib and said, "During this year I had a car accident, I was in hospital for a long time, no-one could tell me if I would be able to walk again. For me, each tiny step forward was a gift. This time changed my life. I have become more attentive and thankful. For me there is nothing small and taken for granted any more - getting up in a morning, sitting down, walking, standing, being there, all things are wonderful, everything is a present. I lay this crutch before the crib, as a sign of my thankfulness to Him who put me back on my feet!"

It became very quiet in the church, as the second king moved forward. The second king was actually a queen, the mother of

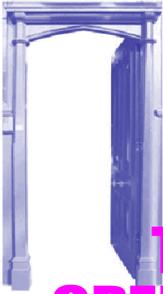
two. She said, “I give you something which no-one can buy, or see or unpack, and which today is nevertheless of greatest value to me. I give you my YES, my life just as it is, exactly as you have led me to this day, even when in between times I’ve no longer been able to believe that you really have a plan for me. I give you my YES, to my life and to everything that belongs to it, my weaknesses and my strengths, my worries and my longing, the people who belong to me, my YES also to my doubts and to my belief. I give my YES to you, Saviour of the world.”

Now the third king stepped forward. A young man, with a crazy hairstyle, dressed to perfection, well styled, just like he would want himself to be seen at any party. Everyone held their breath as he said, in a rather loud voice, “I am the king without presents. I have nothing to offer. Within me is unrest and anxiety. I look as though I am living life, but behind the facade is nothing, no confidence, no purpose, no hope; instead, however, many disappointments, much futility, many hurts as well. I am the king without presents. I doubt just about everything, even you, child in the manger. My hands are empty, but my heart is full, full of longing for forgiveness, reconciliation, security and love. I am here and I hold out my empty hands, anticipating what you have ready for me....”

Deeply touched by this unexpected kingly appearance creating such a good finale, there was now a strange and eerie silence in the room – until Joseph spontaneously went to the crib and pulled out a piece of straw, put it into the empty hand of the young king and said, “The child in the manger is the piece of straw to which you can cling!”

You could almost touch the amazement in the room, because everyone felt that they were all, to a greater or lesser extent, kings with empty hands, despite their full pockets and presents. And so it happened that everyone in the church went forward to the crib and each took a piece of straw. And then suddenly all was clear, that on Christmas Eve there is no shame at all in standing there with empty hands, indeed empty hands are needed so that everyone can take something away, can receive something.

*Griff nach dem Strohalm*, translated from “*Erst eilig, dann heilig*,” a book of Reflections for Advent and Christmas, by German pastor, **Ludwig Burgdörfer**.



## THE OPEN DOOR

Easy to make, cheap and yummy.  
Thank you Pat for this recipe.

**Judith**

### Parsnip and Ginger Soup



25g/1 oz butter  
1 small onion, chopped  
2 large parsnips scrubbed, cored and diced  
1 tsp ground ginger  
1litre/ 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>pints of vegetable or chicken stock

Melt the butter in a large saucepan.  
Add the onion and parsnips and ginger.  
Stir together until soft.  
Add the stock and bring to the boil, stirring.  
Simmer for approx. 20mins.  
Remove from heat and blend until smooth.

## Summer Opening Times

**From March 4th**

**Mondays 2pm-4.30pm  
(Except bank holidays)**



## STEVE GRAY

Born 26 October 1953 in Nottingham. The smile was born – when he was a baby he won a competition for being the bonniest baby! Two years later brother Paul was born in 1955 – when they got into trouble Steve always looked after his little brother.



The boys often stayed at their grandparents in Chesterfield. Grandad Adams was a keen gardener, he was also an artist - so from an early age Steve learnt to enjoy gardening and art. Grandma was always short of money and used to making things including many toys and blackberry and apple pies, the fruit being foraged from walking in the countryside, another passion of Steve's. Never underestimate the importance of being a grandparent, Steve really valued his.

Sister Melanie came along nine years later. Melanie was the gorgeous little bridesmaid at his wedding in 1976.

Steve's mother managed a traditional corner shop where Steve worked after school helping to sell penny chews to children and organising the lists of people buying stuff 'on tick'. Here he developed his ability to talk to anyone with a friendly chat and a smile.

He was a great traveller and Steve loved to explore the world. His first travel experience on his own was a trip to Lourdes with his traditional Catholic school at the age of 10. He returned with his bottle of Holy Water. At the age of 16 he took a flight on his own to Canada and kept the postcard of his first plane trip. In the 6<sup>th</sup> form he won a scholarship to Holland to study town planning. He backpacked alone round Europe with a rail card staying in youth hostels, but of course he was never alone, he made friends and talked to people wherever he went. He seemed to have swallowed the Atlas as he knew every capital city of every country in the world. Consequently it was no surprise that he wanted to study Geography at Durham University which is where he met Rosemary.

Professor Fisher (Head of Geography) welcomed the 100 first-year students and in his opening remarks said that at least 20 people in that lecture theatre were looking at their future spouses.

es, he was right. Steve and Rosemary were two of them. At Durham, Steve was the treasurer of the Geography Society helping to organise events. He and Rosemary organised a Youth Hostelling group with which they travelled mostly by hitch-hiking and then walking for weekend breaks. Many friendships forged there still continue. Orienteering was their favourite sport and this involved leaping and running around forests with a compass trying to find hidden check points. Fundraising for charity was always a top priority and Steve led the parade of students on the University Rag Week dressed in some outlandish Viking type costume, hair flowing long at this time.

After graduating Steve went on to achieve a Masters degree at Sheffield University in Town and Country Planning where he met good friends who will remember many happy evenings together playing Scrabble, drinking wine and eating cake. That hobby (Scrabble) continued for a long time. He loved playing games with family and friends. He dressed up to entertain his children.

Steve and Rosemary were married in Newcastle URC in 1976. They honeymooned in Malta, where it rained and the car they hired had no window wipers; undaunted they toured the island and took a small plane over to Gozo.

Steve's first job as a town planner was in Truro. It was rather a long way from family in Newcastle and Nottingham. Steve and Rosemary joined Rotoract where they soon made friends. Again Steve was the Treasurer and they raised lots of money for local charities. The family consisted of two Afghan hounds and there were many trips walking along the Cornish Coastal footpath and visiting gardens. His own garden was beautiful because everything grew so well in the climate of the South West.

Steve and Rosemary moved to Taunton where Rebecca was born in 1984. There they joined the local church and this is where the family's Methodist story began.

It was with great joy that Steve eventually got a much more interesting job with the Department of Environment in Newcastle in 1987. He became an Environmental Planner and was responsible for issuing Government grants to clean up the environment following the coal-mining era and also tree preservation orders. He became interested in recycling and environmental improvement. This interest continued in his art work which also involved

a lot of recycling of used materials.

In 1988 Amy was born and grandparents were nearer to help. Steve joined the local Round Table and was treasurer raising more funds for charity. Steve was there at the start of the now annual Ponteland New Year Wheelbarrow race. It was while Steve was helping to organise the Round Table morning car boot sale and subsequent Village fair in 1991 that he collapsed and became very ill.

He was diagnosed with a Brain Tumour and Epilepsy when he was only 37 years old. He remained determined to fight to live on beyond the then short prognosis given by doctors. He held on to his faith in God and confounded the doctors, showing them the olive wooden cross in his pocket confirming his desire to live according to the will of God. In 1992 he helped the Round Table to raise £3,000 for the organisation Brainwave, a charity which provides equipment for the Newcastle hospitals which saved his life. In 2001 after several brave attempts to return to work part-time, Steve retired on medical grounds at 47.

It was then that Steve concentrated more heavily on his Art. He did an O level in art at Kirkley Hall then a degree at Newcastle University and went on to do a Masters in Art at Sunderland University where he qualified in 2012.

He had a passion for sunflowers which came from his studies of Van Gogh's work. He worked with A level students at Ponteland



High school to teach them about creative thinking, and taught them to do art in three dimensions with his work on old recycled carpet tubes. He designed and made a metal sculpture at Sunderland which was later used here in our church window to commemorate the anti-slavery movement. He established an art group in the church. He organised an art exhibition in our church hall - some will remember that it was there that he inaugurated the idea of having cups of tea and cake in the afternoon which later became Open Door. There is a mural on the wall in our upstairs hall which he designed and made with the children in 2003 celebrating the Creation story. During an exhibition staged at St Mary's Church in Monkseaton on the theme of Pentecost he witnessed to his art colleagues on the meaning of Pentecost and some will remember his colourful kites flying high in the rafters of the church.

Always the adventurer he travelled together with his family. On the trip to Florida and Disneyland the girls remember his interest in other people, talking to anyone he met and the girls often worried he would lose them in the crowds.

Always interested in walking he was part of the Meanders walking group and also the Footloose group regularly walking up to eight miles in the beautiful Northumberland area he loved so much.

He was a Pastoral Visitor for some time, encouraging people in their daily lives and witnessing to his strong faith in God. He cared about people and was always thinking of others. As we know he always had a smile and a joke with people. He had a sense of humour which was sometimes a bit naughty but never hurtful, just a joy. The friends he made at the St Oswald's day-centre in the hospice told one such naughty story. Knowing his daughter Amy is expecting her baby girl they asked him "Do you like babies?" He answered "I like making them!" Sadly he will not meet his baby granddaughter due in March but his beautiful grandsons Benjamin and Henry have loved him so well as their beloved Papa.

**Jona Sewell**

*"Rosemary says thank you so much to everyone who has contributed to the donations in memory of Steve. The total raised is £2500. Thanks also for the personal friendship and support she has received."*

## **OUR LOVELY DAD**

My Dad was a man on a mission - to live, laugh and love!

A mission he inspired to all who met him.

From my early memories of my father I remember my Dad always so keen to live life to the full! Building gigantic sandcastles on Bamburgh beach, hosting children's parties after school, playing games with us. He always wanted to have fun laughing and smiling together. Sometimes Dad got into such scrapes. His trousers often fell down at family get-togethers, he came close with dog poo a few times and lost a pizza to seagulls to name some. Dad lived and laughed for every moment.

Dad loved art and became his art quite literally. He would often be found in his best clothes painting or getting messy. Poor Mum gave up trying to keep his clothes nice! His love of art led him to achieving as well as learning every day. Dad always pushed himself forward wanting us all to achieve. This determination went beyond all medical advice. Dad had a gift of seeing something more and different in all sorts of things. He would often rummage around in skips and beachcomb until his pockets were full, creating great sculptures and paintings.

Dad's love of life led him to so many other people too. There have been many times on holidays or weekends when Mum, Amy and I would wonder where he had gone and find him talking to new people, losing him in a crowd. Dad's smile was infectious! Everyone loved his smile.

When talking about my Dad my husband Phil mentioned this story to me which I thought summed up his trust and love in his family and God. When walking in the Northumbrian Hills Dad marched across a field quite purposefully but when Phil asked "which way do we go?" my Dad replied, quite matter-of-factly, "I don't know" but off Dad went without a question or concern as it was beautiful walking and that's all that mattered.

Dad taught us so many things throughout our lives. As we have got older we have reflected more on the great man that he is to us. He knew God was on his side despite the difficulties he faced helping him strive forward to be all that he could be with his family and friends. He has inspired us to live our lives to the full, without regret, for each moment however small. To laugh and love a clear mission to continue.

**Amy and Rebecca**

## THE WITNESS OF EZRA

Yes, even in these northern parts we had heard the rumours. He seems to be stirring things up considerably in Jerusalem. Am I surprised? Well, yes and no. As you say, I was one of his pals here at Nazareth when we were boys together – grew up with him from childhood you might say *and* worked alongside him for many years. Nazareth is a small village but quite a mixed place even so. Back in the old times when Cyrus of Persia let what remained of God's people back to Canaan, very few got back into ancestral places. My Dad's folk, for instance, call Gad their clan-father and Mizpah Gilead their home town. Jesus, though he lived here since he was three, was by family a Judean from Bethlehem, away down South.

Jesus' late father was our village carpenter and my Dad a stonemason and they often worked together house-building; we both followed their trade.

'Was Jesus my special friend at school?' you ask. Well, actually, he was every lad's pal, a good mixer and a leader; he was even friendly with the girls, having sisters of his own, of course. 'Was he always so different?' No, he was always one of us at play or school and as he grew up. He served an ordinary apprenticeship with his father and after that finished he worked with Joseph until the old man died and then carried on the business. His workmanship was well known in the area. Yes, he was always one of us. He loved a party and was a team player. He was not the only man from the village to go to hear the Baptist; that mission really shook the whole country out of a rut and the sound went out to all dispersed Jewry, too. So when Jesus himself joined the campaign for national repentance we were not surprised.

But that was before he came back here and shook us all up! We quite expected that he would join us in the synagogue and preach repentance, but when he did it we were all shocked by what he said. For a start he read a bit out of the prophecy of Isaiah and told us he himself was fulfilling it – he, our village chippy was the Lord Almighty's prophet!! That was odd, but he was an attractive speaker and folk liked him. But he sensed that there was a strong undercurrent of scepticism and then he let that lot have it in no uncertain terms. Went back over old history to find all the bits where Gentiles were blessed and He-

brews missed out. Rubbed it in: no home-grown prophets were ever accepted he said! I tell you, that was not on! The hotheads were for throwing him down the escarpment. They mobbed him, manhandled him to the cliff edge, but somehow there was a new power about him that, astoundingly, allowed him to turn and just walk through them and away. He had a place in Capernaum after that and never came back here or did any wonderful healing or anything. He'd been one of us and now, well – he just wasn't. He'd crossed a line. This village doesn't like new ideas or want a new leader. Perhaps we don't like Almighty God Himself very much. He disturbs us!

**John Gill**

**PONTELAND'S WORLD DAY of PRAYER SERVICE  
"COME – EVERYTHING is READY"**

Will be held at ST. MARY'S CHURCH on 1st March at 2.15pm followed by refreshments in the Parish Centre. Everything is ready and the invitation is for everyone – men, women and children of all ages to join this worldwide Day of Prayer.

Women of Slovenia have prepared this service. They encourage us to reflect on the barriers they have faced since the end of World War 2, when their country was part of Yugoslavia, a Marxist socialist republic. They share the challenges they have met, and the hopes they have for the future.

World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organisation which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world: their hopes, concerns and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast. An international committee is based in New York and there are national committees in each participating country. Regional conferences meet to consider the service, and then local groups make their plans. Finally a local church near you, in our case St. Mary's, prepares to celebrate the Slovenian service.

This Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 120 countries worldwide, beginning in Samoa and travelling through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas, finishing in American Samoa some 38 hours later.

**DO COME ALONG!!**

**Chris Cogan**

## GARDENING FOR FEBRUARY 2019

May I wish everyone a "Happy New Year" and Good Gardening in 2019. It is time to get going again after a Christmas break. Snowdrops, crocus, dwarf iris and daffodils are all showing through. The second planting of Paperwhite daffodils are ready to be moved into the porch (writing 9 January) as the first planting are beginning to fade.

2018 was declared the second warmest summer on record. Keeping all the planters moist was very challenging but almost everything survived. Although rainfall was low in May, June and July (0.94 inches in June) the total for the year was only 3.12 inches below the average (33.42 inches as recorded at 30 Callerton Court over 20 years) at 30.30 inches. Precipitation was highest in March (5.39 inches when some fell as snow and melted). Many of the other months were over 2 inches. We had only one flood at the bottom of the garden.

The logo for 'Which?' is a red square with the word 'Which?' in white, bold, sans-serif font. The question mark is slightly larger and more prominent than the word.

Which? Gardening has again been testing growing media (composts) for seed sowing and raising young plants. They tested for compost quality, germination, size and vigour of plants and consistency of the compost (difference between bags bought

from four locations). Thompson & Morgan Incredicompost came out as the 'great all rounder' with a 98% score. It does cost 20p per litre (£14.99 per bag plus delivery) and is only available from them. For seed sowing Clover Multi-Purpose Compost was given 100% score, it costs 8p per litre has 100% peat and is stocked by Halls of Heddon and used by them. Bathgate Champions Blend All Purpose Compost came 3<sup>rd</sup> with a 93% score (70% peat and 13p per litre) with Westlands Jack's Magic All Purpose Compost next with a 90% score (90% peat, 12p per litre, available at Dobbies). The three Best Buys for raising young plants are Thompson and Morgan Incredicompost (96%), Waitrose & Partners Multi Purpose Compost (89%, 50% peat, 10p per litre) and Westland MultiPurpose with John Innes (88%, 60% peat 12p per litre). Which? recommend not to buy Lidl Peat-Free Compost (43%) and Wyevale Peat-Free Multipurpose Compost. I promised I would continue the list of 'Best Buy' perennials, by variety so here we go! Most like fertile free draining, moist but well drained soils and located in full sun/part shade situation. However Hemerocallis, Miscanthus Verbascum, Erysimum, Pen-

stemons, Kniphofea and Peonies will perform best in full sun. Most are summer flowering except Miscanthus doing best from August to October. Which? gives a number of varieties with each perennial plant. I will give you their 'Best Buy' variety as a target to look for. Alstromeria - 'Friendship', Campanula – 'E. H.



Frost' (white flowers), Eremurus – 'Ruiter Hybrids', Hemerocallis – 'Golden Chimes', Hardy geraniums – 'Mavis Simpson', Miscanthus – 'Little Kitten', Peonies – 'Bowl of Beauty,' Salvia – 'Caradonna' Kniphofia – 'Fiery Fred', Phlox – Laura (blue), Verbasicum – V. nigrum, Erysimum – 'Constant Cheer', Penstemons – 'Pensham Just Jane'. If anyone is "particularly" interested I

will photocopy 2 pages where these are detailed and listed. Gardening continues in the winter as well. Although I haven't been doing much, Margaret has been out clearing leaves and cutting back! The old fronds of the deciduous ferns and the 'tired' ones on the evergreen ferns have gone together with the old leathery leaves of the helibores. Care should be taken not to damage new growth particularly with the ferns. The flowers of the helibores look wonderful when they can grow upright unhindered by old leaves. You can still cut back the old foliage of herbaceous perennials and divide large clumps. Add some compost and some controlled-release fertilizer when replanting. I have ordered my vegetable seeds and am now selecting which plug plants to order. I grow on the plug plants as individuals (not in trays) so they develop strong roots before planting out. It will soon be time to sow broad beans and sweet peas in the greenhouse – all started as individual plants. Mange tout will be sown at the end of February. Good Gardening.

Syd Cowan



Ponteland Methodist Church

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April**  
**10am – 4.30pm**

Cost £14 inc. soup lunch

## HELLO FROM ALISON

Happy New Year! I hope you have had a time of joy and relaxation over the festive season which now seems a distant memory!! I want to say a HUGE THANK YOU to all those who helped with an extremely successful Christmas Journey. From our set-up and take-down teams to the puppeteers, actors and chaperones you were all amazing and we could never have done it without you. Almost 90 children plus teachers and carers went through the journey and they were all buzzing when leaving the building. I received a very nice email from one of the headteachers a couple of days later saying how excited both the children and adults were on their return to school.

So we embark on a new year where we continue with the Lunch Club at the High School and we seek to see if the homework club is still the right thing to offer at this time. There was a hit and miss attendance with it and so we are relaunching it this term and will then decide as to its future. If it doesn't continue I don't feel disappointed as I feel God has another plan and we need to seek His guidance on that.

The week of March 25-29<sup>th</sup> is when our Easter Journey will take place and lots of help will also be required for set-up/take-down, participation and chaperones etc. If you think you can help with this then please do get in touch with me, the sooner the better.

Letters have already gone out to the schools inviting the year 5s to this event and we have already one school booked in!!!

We have a Holiday Club booked in for the 29<sup>th</sup> July to the 2<sup>nd</sup> August with a fun event on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and I hope to gather a team together to run this as it's a full week's worth of fun, games, bible stories and craft.

I continue to be involved in assemblies at Coates Middle School and Ponteland Primary every month. They are going well and we are making good connections with the schools through these.

We are still very involved in the GB and BB on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

By the time you read this Tatiana will have sadly left the country to return to Colombia - I want to say a BIG thank you to her for all she has contributed these past 11 months to the life of the Church and the work we have been involved in together. I wish her well in her next adventure!!

Blessings to you all

**Alison**

## **FAREWELL NOTE: THANK YOU AND GOODBYE**

It is unbelievable how fast the year has gone. As my time here comes to an end, I realise that there are so many things I would like to do, to say and also there are so many thanks I need to express; so let's start it with a brief summary of my time in Pon-



teland. The transition wasn't as smooth as I wished it was, to adjust to a different culture and ways of doing things made this experience quite interesting. Personally, I have learnt that there are different ways to worship and all of them are precious to God as long we do it with all our heart. I have also learnt that my spiritual growth depends mostly on the personal time I spend in with the King, independently of the church, the denom-

ination or the worship style. I've learnt to rely on God, to accept help, and to understand that things are not always as I planned. After months I finally understood that "tea" isn't just the English national drink, but it also means "dinner," however "dinner" is not necessarily the night time meal, but it can be a "lunch" meal, as long it is big. Never mind about the language, sometimes I have to tell myself: yes, you are in the UK and yes, what those people are speaking is English; the slangs and the idioms have kept me thinking for long hours trying to figure out what they mean. I am sure many of you struggle to understand what I say. As a result of my responsibilities here, I got the chance to get in touch with different ministries like: Open Door, BB, GB, Toddlers, and the Sunday Club. I've been able to support them or attend the sessions, which has let me witness the well-known Methodist hospitality and fellowship. More directly related with my job, Alison and I started a lunch group in the high school; we have led assemblies in the primary schools, and we had a tentative beginning of the homework club. I believe that these little steps are part of the new foundations of the church. Simultaneously, I have been supporting the Spanish-speaking classes in the high school. I had the opportunity to help in the holiday club at Stamfordham, and to start the new lunch club at Stamfordham's school too. Yes, this has been a busy and exciting year. Anyway, it is time to say goodbye, but I cannot do so without

first saying thank you. First of all I want to thank God, because it was He who guided me here. He has blessed me more than I could ever imagine. Also, I want to thank the church in general for welcoming me into this precious community; thank you very much. At this point I am supposed to express individual thanks, but to be honest I don't want to take the risk of forgetting names, so instead I will mention moments. Thank you for the nice chats, cakes and games in Open Door; thank you for conversations after the service or whenever we met. Thank you asking me if I was settling in, if I liked the weather; for asking how my family was doing back at home, or how I was doing with my "swimming" lessons, (which I never took). Thank you for taking me out for a walk, to visit other ministries in the region, for taking me to watch a film, or to visit a nice place. Thank you for lunch, dinner (whatever time of day it was) or for a nice cup of tea, herbal of course. Thank you for keeping warm in winter with scarves and socks. Thank you for the wonderful weekend in Edinburgh. Thank you for amazing landscapes whilst we "Meandered". Thank you for lifts, for making sure I have had internet connection and a decent mobile whilst I was here, thank you for blowing kisses and waving to me on FB, thank you for handmade cards.

Here I have learnt this saying: "sharing is caring", and if you think about it, caring is loving; so thank you for sharing your stories, your time, your home, and your family events with this complete stranger. I hope one day I will have the opportunity to do it for you too. Also I want to say thanks to all of you who supported me financially so I could pay for my year in here; thank you to those I know and to my anonymous "friend in Christ". To my family in the UK, thank you so much for encouraging me to pursue my dreams and projects; for so much love, for the kindness, the patience and the generosity beyond my understanding. Thank you for embracing me, I love you too. One day at the start of my year, a lovely gentleman told me: "it seems like everybody loves you", and then he added, "so far". For any faults or mistakes, I sincerely apologise, I didn't mean to hurt you. I hope that now this year has come to an end you do still love me because I love you.

Bye and Love,

**Tatiana**

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

### February

- Tuesday 5th 2.30pm Women's Fellowship—Andrew Pay  
Thursday 7th 7.30pm Forum dinner at Blackbird  
Tuesday 12th 7.00pm Pastoral meeting  
Thursday 14th 7.30pm Focus Shelter Box - Jonathan Ewan  
and Ann Cooper  
Saturday 16th 9.30pm Meanders  
Tuesday 19th 2.30pm Women's Fellowship - Pauline Groves  
Wednesday 27th 2.30pm Service at Grange Lea  
Thursday 28th 7.30pm Focus - Members Night  
7.30pm Church Council

### March

- Friday 1st 2.15pm Women's World Day of Prayer  
Saturday 2nd 9.30am Meanders  
10.00am Mini Meanders

### April

- Saturday 6th 10-4.30pm Walk Through the Bible

## FAMILY NEWS

Please hold the **Swifts** in your prayers. They are both unwell just now, particularly Pauline.

**Brian & Joyce Davis** & family would like to thank everyone most sincerely for all of their loving concern, prayers and very kind offers of help with shopping, lifts and support in various ways since Brian became ill. We also very much appreciate your beautiful cards, flowers, prayer books, visits and encouragement for which we are extremely grateful. The Church Mission Statement, "Let the love of Jesus be known" has been truly demonstrated. Many, many thanks and may God bless you all.

**Jean Trimble** is back home after another spell in hospital, and is now being cared for by her sister Betty at home.

**Lilian Smith** and **Marion Danby** have just celebrated birthdays, congratulations.

**Preachers  
February**

- 3rd 10.00am Sewell (AA)  
6.30pm Wynne  
10th 10.00am Sewell  
10.00am Maynard  
6.30pm Sewell (S)  
17th 10.00am Woolley (S)  
10.00am Wood  
6.30pm Cunningham  
24th 10.00am Forrester  
10.00am P Brooks (S)  
6.30pm Forrester



*We believe that when people engage with the Bible, lives can change, for good.*

Ponteland Bible Society Action Group invite you to their

**Spring Lunch**

**Wednesday 13 March 2019  
at 12 noon  
United Reformed Church**

Ticket price £8 per person

mbisociety.org.uk Registered charity 232759

**Newcastle Methodist District Music Society**

***Maunder's  
'Olivet to Calvary'***

**Saturday March 16th 2019  
Brunswick Methodist Church  
Newcastle upon Tyne**

***Come and sing:***

Workshop at 1.30 for 2.00 p.m. Fee £3

***Come to the evening worship:***

Service at 7.00 p.m.

For further information or bookings contact

Monica Goldfinch 0191 285 6223; [monica.goldfinch@btinternet.com](mailto:monica.goldfinch@btinternet.com)

**From The Editors**

*Don't forget that copy for the March edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 22nd February 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.*